

15 minutes and then take up the discussion on the flood situation.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the discussion on the flood situation is very important. It should be taken up now.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : In the normal course we should have taken up that discussion now. Since we have taken up this item we can finish this discussion in about 15 minutes as there are only two or three speakers to participate in this discussion.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : If we can finish this item within 10 minutes, it is allright. Otherwise we can take it up tomorrow and the Members who want to speak on this item also would get sufficient time.

17.05 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Heavy loss of life and damage to property due to Floods in many parts of the country. - contd

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now we will take up the discussion on flood situation. Shri Anadi Charan Das to speak you.

[Translation]

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS (JAJPUR) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been heavy flood in Orissa this year and it is the severest in my constituency because all the big rivers like the Baitarni, the Mahanadi and the Brahmani pass through

it. My area covers coastal area and all the tributaries also pass through it. Flood is not a new phenomenon for my constituency. Flood has been taking place there for a pretty long time. I have been raising this issue in this august House for the last 20 years. Discussion is held here every year and umpteen suggestions are given but no action is taken on these suggestions. The result of all this is that the situation does not improve at all. This flood is man-made because no action is taken by the Government to prevent it and hence this plight does not come to an end. We raise this issue here every year and the people of my constituency understand that their representative takes up their issues in Parliament but no action is taken on our suggestions. 554 Villages and 135 Gram Panchayats in my constituency are badly flood affected. There is a dam on the river Brahmani. The continuous release of water from this dam causes water-logging in my constituency. Water has been logged in my area since 1st July because it is a low lying area. Water is reduced for one or two days and thereafter it is released again. There is the Natural Calamity Committee of which I am also a member. Its meeting is often held but when flood taken place, no meeting is held. The Government does not implement the suggestions made by us... (Interruptions).. I am talking about the Government of Orissa and not of the Central Government. The Central Government merely allocates funds, the rest of the task is performed by the State Government but sometimes the Central Government should send a supervisory team there to see whether the funds it has released are being utilised properly or not. Why does not the Government press military into service there? If the State Government fails in making arrangements in advance to control the floods, then the Centre should send there military and make necessary

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preparations to control the floods. Not even a single sack of land has been put there and it is known to all that relief items were purchased from the open market. The Chairman and the Sarpanch call the members of their own party and distribute the relief material to them only. When the members of the Congress Party go there they are not given the relief items and are humiliated. I myself have gone there and found it. They claim that the relief had been provided for seven days whereas actually it had been given for not more than three days. Many irregularities were committed in it. The Government should examine it first before releasing the relief funds.

My constituency has been affected the most by flood. The water system of rivers is such that it causes more harm to my constituency. The Central Government provides funds to the States to meet their flood crisis. Therefore, it is entitled to ensure that the funds are utilised properly in flood-affected areas only. I have found it in my State, where the Janata Dal is in power, that only those persons are given relief who have voted for that party. In tribal areas, the poor have not been given any relief.

In Orissa, specially in coastal areas, threat of flood from the Mahanadi, the Brahmini and the Baitarni rivers continues. The catchment areas of the Brahmini and the Mahanadi is very large. In rainy season water of these rivers flows to my constituency and inundates it. I urge the Government to make Rangali Dam as a multipurpose dam to control flood. Such a proposal was there earlier but was not implemented. Earlier, land bags used to be heaped for protection from flood, but this time this arrangement also has not been made. Similarly, no arrangement has been made for a watchman

also who used to make a surveillance at night with a torch in his hand.

There is hardly any village in my constituency which has not been affected from diseases like diarrhoea etc. Our Congress workers and some voluntary organisations asked for some relief from the Government as we had come to know day before yesterday that 1000 paracetamol tablets had been sent there. Now you can yourself imagine how such a small number of tablets can be of any use in a such a large area where about one thousand persons are sick even in a single village? There is, therefore, shortage of medicines. Prior arrangements are must in flood-prone areas. Usually flood occurs in my area in the month of June and July and all the embankments are breached at that time. It causes heavy losses to our constituency. I, therefore, request that this loss should be compensated. My suggestion is that the State Government should chalk out a flood control programme for the next 5 to 10 years.

I thank you for the time given to me.

SHRI HARI CHAND SINGH (ROPAR)
: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Agriculture who has arranged this discussion on floods. In my State Punjab also there was severe flood last year. Though the Government worked a lot of cleanse the river in Patiala, yet some crops got damaged there. While making his statement, the hon. Minister referred to all the States Except Punjab. A large chunk of the crops has been damaged in Punjab this Year. During his rule, the Maharaja of Patiala used to deploy labourers to clean the river, but nothing was done thereafter. Due to floods the prices of all essential commodities hike. For example, sugar is being sold at Rs. 17 per kilogram

whereas earlier it used to be sold quite cheap. We had purchased 17 kilograms of gur for one rupee and one seer of ghee for 15 annas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to floods, labourers have been rendered jobless. Our party as well as Gandhiji professed nationalisation of land. But this has not materialised till date. The rich people have money with which they can meet their needs, but what should the poor farmers do if their crops are damaged? The Harijans who used to pick up dung of the buffaloes of the jats 47 years back, are still doing the same work and yet they vote for Congress. The jats in Punjab have ceased to vote for the Congress for the 42 years.

However, the person like Shri Balam Jakhar does get their votes there but any other candidate from the Congress cannot obtain their votes. However, it is ironical that the Chief Minister favours those who do not vote for his party but those who vote for it are demaend to pick up buffalo dung. I would like to submit that earlier we used to get 15 kilograms of flour for One rupee but now it is being sold at five rupees per kilogram. For want of employment a labourer, who needs 3 kgs of flour a day for his family, does not have 15 rupees daily to spend. Even the price of wheat has been raised. If this trend of price hike of food grain items continues and the poor do not get these things, they will certainly rebel after ten years.

These floods harm us. But it does not mean that the Government should raise the prices. Those whose crops have been damaged, should be compensated. Why should the entire country suffer? The staple diet of the people in Punjab is wheat. If they do not get wheat, what should they eat? Since the time he has become the Minister of Agriculture Shri Balam Jakhar has raised

the price of wheat by Rs. 100 per quintal. How then the labourers can manage the things. The hon. Minister should not raise the prices of food grain items so arbitrarily. The poor vote for the congress because they consider the party as a good organisation where no discrimination is made. Religion does not come into picture here. The poor should not be crushed so much by raising the prices of wheat etc. Petrol once used to be sold eleven and a half annas per gallon; now it is Rs. 85 per gallon. Shri Jakhar is a considerate person. My submission is that the occurrence of flood does not mean that there should be a raise in the price of wheat by Rs. 30 or 40 per quintal. He has been very considerate to jats. We solicit him to be so to us also. Otherwise the Harijans who elect the Congress Government, will be ruined. In the past the rate of sugar was Rs. 7 per kilogram. Now it has been raised to Rs. 17 per kilogram. It is very strange. Gur is not available in the market. The price of sugarcane has not been increased. When the rate of sugar was Rs. 7 per kilogram, the price of sugarcane was Rs. 50 per quintal. Now the rate of sugar has been raised to Rs. 17 per kilogram and that of gur to Rs. 62 per quintal. But the previous rate of sugarcane has not been increased at all. Commensurate with the hike of prices of wheat and other articles, the price of sugarcane should have been raised to Rs. 100 per quintal. That is why, perhaps the people of Punjab have, stopped growing sugarcane. Therefore, the Government is compelled to import sugar. If the price of sugarcane is increased and maintained properly, Punjab alone can supply like wheat, sufficient sugar to the whole country.

There are large number of sugar mills in the country. But the farmers do not grow sugarcane even in those places where water is available sufficiently. It is only because

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the rates of sugarcane are very low. With the hike in the rates of wheat and rice the farmers have switched over mainly to these two items.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You should speak on flood.

SHRI HARCHAND SINGH : I am speaking on floods only stating that prices are raised when the crops are damaged in flood. This time the standing wheat and rice crops in thousands of acres of land were destroyed due to floods. Price-hike follows the destruction of crops and the poor in the country starve. That is to say that the floods directly affect the poor and not the rich people.

Our Punjab is predominantly an agricultural province. There is no industry there. The farmers and the labourers do no work other than farming. 80 per cent of population lives in villages but everything comes to a standstill when there are floods. There are floods because since India got independence, the Government paid no attention at all on clearing of the silt etc. deposited in the drains constructed during the Princely era. There has been the Congress rule. I wish that these drains be cleaned, if so happens floods will never take place and there will be no damage to crops. With this, I thank you.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If each Member is to speak for five minutes, then, you can complete it and the Minister can also reply. So far, 21 Members have participated in the debate. So far, the Members have taken three hours and twenty seven minutes. Still there are some names.

If you just speak for five minutes, I think justice can be done.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR (NASIK): Sir, I do not know whether my name is there or not(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It has been discussed very extensively. The Minister has also understood everything.

[Translation]

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (GUWAHATI) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of floods is not new to Assam. There are floods not only once but thrice a year floods are now an indispensable part of the life of Assamese.

When we were school going children, we were asked to write an essay on the most talked about subject, i.e. whether Brahmaputra is a blessing or a curse? Brahmaputra is a source of water for us and, thus, a part of our life, a specific aspect of our culture and similarly we wrote an essay on floods. It contained all the advantages and disadvantages because the adverse effects of floods were not repeated. The sad part of it is that even today our children write the same essay in schools- whether Brahmaputra is a blessing or a curse? This is because the problem of floods has not been solved till date. There are floods every year and Ministers of the Central Government of those of the State Government visit the flood affected areas, contact people to get the knowledge of the situation and do some relief work which we term as short term arrangement and we pay more attention to this short term arrangement.

Even in this arrangement, there are lacunae. Therefore, as I was informed earlier, the policy of the Finance Commission

is that Central Government will give 75 per cent assistance and the State Government 25 per cent. Now, in a State like Assam where there are many problems and clashes, the resources of the State are diverted to the maintenance of law and order situation and it becomes difficult to give 25 per cent assistance for flood relief work. Yesterday, an hon. Member from Kerala called for a review of this policy of Finance Commission and urged the Central Government to grant 90% assistance for flood relief works.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, arrangements for assistance for preventing the people from the scourge of floods have always been made in our State. This year, floods have not been as dreadful compared to those of previous year because only tow-three districts were affected but it will be wrong to say that the problem of floods ended here because there is possibility of floods till October there. Due to less rains, a drought like situation has arisen there but the climate is such that it can rain anytime and if there are rains for 10-12 days, there is every possibility of floods. Therefore, it is wrong to say that there will be no floods now. Therefore, some precautionary steps should be taken there beforehand and we should be alert.

The medical assistance provided for prevention from post-flood diseases, like cholera epidemic spreading in many districts, is not adequate and there is the misappropriation of funds provided to the States for the cattle. Previous year, there was a great scandal of Rs. 200 crores known as the Veterinary scandal, a widely debated one, into which the CBI is conducting an inquiry. People say that in this scandal money was spent on buying TVs for the cows and

buffaloes to watch. Therefore, my suggestion is that in place of spending money on flood relief works, there is need to find a permanent solution of it.

I would like to request that consideration should be given to finding out a proper and permanent solution to it before we take up discussion on the flood relief works. For this, we can effectively check the large scale floods if the proposed two long bridges are constructed across Brahmaputra. But it is only being discussed all those years and no proper arrangement has been made for this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the anti-national secessionist elements of the State also get an opportunity of taking political advantage out of this problem of floods. Therefore, solution should be sought to this also. There is an urgent need to mobilise resources. There is the Brahmaputra Board, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Planning Commission. There is need to control floods through Irrigation Canal system under the policy of component. We will have to firmly make arrangements for this.

For its success, the Master Plan should be implemented forthwith. I do not want to speak much. I hope that a permanent solution of the problem of floods in Assam will be sought. More grants-in-aid should be provided to Assam. During floods last year as much assistance was not given to Assam as the State Government had demanded but as was possible. For taking permanent steps of controlling Brahmaputra floods schemes should be implemented with the aid of institutions like the World Bank so that Brahmaputra is turned from a curse into a blessing. With this hope, I conclude.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV :
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the situation of Bihar in the country is very peculiar. When the North Bihar faces flood situation, the South Bihar reels under drought.

17.37 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

But this time the entire Bihar is in the grip of drought. As Shri Chaliha pointed out just now that Assam faces flood thrice in a year. Bihar also faces the same situation. The water of Kosi river originating from Assam, Nepal and the Himalayas brings destruction in the North Bihar. At present, when the water from the hills of Himalayas is not flowing, a drought like situation has emerged there. My submission is that providing relief is not something very important. The Government should find out a permanent solution to the problem. I am talking of a single commissioner. Every year the Central Government and State Government spend crores of rupees on Kosi river, but this leads to no concrete result. I would like the Central Government to formulate schemes so as to find out a permanent solution to the problem.

MR. SPEAKER : Discussion on it has been going on for 3 days. In the agenda, 3 days were allotted for it.

[English]

That means we are not in a position to take up any other item. This is an important item; so you have to be very brief and you have to hit the nail on the head only. Otherwise it can cover anything like irrigation. I think the hon. Minister has to go and if you expect him to reply, please be brief.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV :
The Government should formulate a scheme in this regard. A survey of Kosi range was conducted by the Government. With regard to the construction of Kosi dam. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It comes under department of Irrigation and not under floods and drought.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV : If there is Kosi, it is but natural that there would be water, and people get drowned in that water.

MR. SPEAKER : It won't do if you go into the details of it.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV : If you are displeased with me, how would it be possible for me to express my views.

MR. SPEAKER : We are to take other items of agenda also. I have got an information that.

[English]

Hon. Minister has to attend the Cabinet meeting also. Do you not want his reply?

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV : All right. I would take up this issue on some other occasion, later on.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Thank you. I hope that the other hon. Members will not insist

on speaking, if they want the hon. Minister to reply, please.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. About 25 Members have expressed their views on the subject. I am grateful to them also I do realise their pathos, sufferings and worries. I do have an experience of it. Because I can well understand where the pain is, and who the sufferer is. Usually when there are floods, the poor man is the worst sufferer. It is certainly a matter of concern. All the hon. Members want to raise the matters concerning their respective constituencies. But there is a limit to everything. That is why they have to conclude in short. I have full sympathy for them because they are their brothers and associated. Due to this they have to suffer. I try to realise their problems. But Sir, today my heart pains. If Mr. Speaker permits me and if there is some time, I would like to give vent to my feelings.

I have been deeply related with this august House and that place; I have even nursed this relation and always tried to enhance the dignity of the House India has been known as the greatest democracy in the world. I am proud of this. We have witnessed buildings turning into ruins. However, the democratic institutions are standing firm as Himalayas. The House has also contributed a lot to this fact. Today, I am speaking and giving the reply. But I am distressed to see all the front seats lying vacant. This situation is not good. We also have some responsibility; we are to maintain the dignity of the House and also to fulfil the responsibility we have towards those who have elected us as their representatives.

Besides, your present term as a speaker here, you had been fulfilling such responsibilities earlier too. You are aware of the fact that it is a matter of great pride to get elected for the Parliament. Out of the total population of 92 crores, about 790 persons have been elected for the Parliament. It is an evidence that people have given a great honour and also a great responsibility to us. We must realise it. We should realise that we are not here for ourselves. The existence of everything in this world is transitory and not permanent and it is the honour done to us by the people that today we are here. Then why should we feel proud of ourselves. We should realise that we are here to serve people. But how? We are to work in a democratic manner. The activities taking place here for the last several days have been a matter of concern.

I am not concerned about the fate of JPC report. I am worried as to what would be the fate of the Parliamentary procedure. To what direction are we heading to and what steps are we going to take. We may have our personal point of view towards the report of JPC. But the Parliament as a whole also have a view point. Parliamentary opinion is formed when discussions take place. All the hon. Members sitting here are learned persons. Even if the two countries have a war between them, they have to sit together on one table, discuss the matter and sign the agreement to stop the war. We should also follow the same concept and overcome the hurdles by discussing the matter together. However, when I see majority of the seats in the House lying vacant. I would like to submit that all the hon. Members of the opposition are my friends; we may have difference of opinion but do not have malice towards anybody. We are all brothers, we never feel that we have separate identity. Difference of opinion is essential, this

Parliament is like a two wheeler. If one of its two wheels is missing, Parliament and the country cannot be run. We must realise what our responsibility is.

I reiterate that the problem can be solved but a somewhat liberal attitude will have to be adopted for this purpose. There is a saying in English. Somebody has rightly quoted :

[English]

"A minority has every right to have its say. And it must have a say. It has a legal right to have a say. But in a majority, the majority has the right to have its way."

[Translation]

This is essential, alright, but the majority cannot be ignored. We would not like to act in this manner either in the present or in the future; rather we don't want to act in that way. That is why I would like that we all should sit together, discuss the problem and try to find a solution to the problem confronting us, we should realise that the people have elected us for this purpose only. Gone are the days, when power was inherited, at present the representatives are elected by the people. Therefore it is our duty to think about it. It would be difficult to make an account of the facilities we are availing. People have done a great favour to us, we enjoy a number of privileges. We get salary, allowances and even the facility of air-travel. If an hon. Member works for four years as a Parliamentarian he gets pension where as the other employees working in the Government offices are eligible to get pension only after serving for 20-25 years we get all facilities; we get telephone facility, medical facility and what not. Therefore it is not justified to neglect the things and act in this manner. Cordial atmosphere and not

opposition is required to run the proceedings of the House. Discussion solves every problem. That is why I would like to submit that I would be greatly satisfied if I succeed in persuading the hon. Members in this regard. This would not only help the country to maintain its identity but would also help in running the proceedings of the House properly. There is nothing to make a fuss over insignificant matters. There is nothing to feel small in this regard or holding one's moustaches high or low. There is a saying in Urdu...

AN HON. MEMBER : These days even moustaches are shaved.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Even then moustaches have their own significance.

[English]

SHRI P.C.CHACKO (TRICHUR) : What about floods Sir? We are so much worried about the floods.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : There is a couplet :

"Sar jhuka ke salam karne mein koi
harz nahin
Magar itna na jhuka dein ki sartaj gir
pade."

My only submission in this regard is that it is my sentimental appeal.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : May I add something to what you have said? Dr. Balram Jakhar Saheb, former Speaker has made a reference to the absence of the Members of the Opposition Parties in the House with

emotion in his heart and with a trace of tears in his eyes. We share his noble feelings and appeal to the hon. Members of Opposition that they, in the interest of our parliamentary system of democracy and also having done their duty quite forcefully and coherently, may please return to this House and thereby raise the standards and the status of this House and the System and add to its glory by such a stand.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have done a great favour to us by expressing your as well as beautifully.

We have been discussing the flood situation in the House for the last three days. All the hon. Members are equally sorry for it and have expressed their views here. They have suggested various solutions to it while referring to the situation that prevailed earlier. I agree to what they have stated. I also realise the difficulties faced by the people. Shri Ahmad is not present in the House at present, he was here a few moments ago and had pointed out that I used to pay frequent visits there but despite being so friendly I did not visit there this time. I would like to tell him that my love always increases and never decreases. I have learnt to love and not to fight or avoid things.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (ADOOR) : But you have not visited our State.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : I am ready to come any time.

[Translation]

Please listen to me first. If we fold the

map of India, Punjab and Kerala come closer. I can come at any moment. I may please tell you the reason why I did not come. On 12th of July the Additional Commissioner had gone there under my direction, he has gathered all the information there. I have with me the information about all the States. I hold meeting every week. I try to maintain coordination but there are certain restrictions which will certainly be removed. I have already apprised the hon. Prime Minister of the difficulties. I hope that the hon. Member from Kerala has already met the Prime Minister. He has told me that he also referred to the same problems. These problems will certainly be removed. I would make every possible effort to cure the ailment.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR (DURG) : Would you provide your healing touch to Madhya Pradesh also.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : This is what I am submitting to you. I have the medicine in my pocket. Chandrakar ji I want you to prosper and not to suffer. After we achieved Independence, it was decided to give utmost priority to control floods in the country. All the hon. Members know that in order to control floods we need dams, environmental afforestation on one hand and confine rural inhabitation at high level places on the other. It is right that hundreds of crores of rupees are spent every year. It requires several thousand or lakh crore rupees to meet the disaster caused by floods. All dams in this regard are to be constructed and measures be taken to desilt the rivers as well as making proper embankment on them. I would like to submit to you that our area.

[English]

India is one of the most flood prone

[Shri Balram Jakhar]

countries in the world. On an average, the area affected by floods annually is about 8 million hectares, out of which the cropped area affected is about 3.7 million hectares. I am giving you some statistical data. Assessed flood prone area are 40 million hectares in 21 States and one Union Territory. Protectible area is 32 million hectares. Average area affected by floods annually is 8 million hectares. Cropped area affected annually is 3.7 million hectares. Maximum area damaged in one year is 17.5 million hectares. This was in the year 1978. And the annual damages amount to Rs. 9500 million.

[Translation]

But we are helpless to some extent; ours is a large country having big river and all that... (interruption)...

[English]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR (DURG) : You should build more dams.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : That will have to be seen. We will have to correlate this with the Departments of Irrigation, Rural Development, PWD, Engineering and Electricity Board. All these departments will have to be brought together to formulate a united plan.

[Translation]

I would like to tell you what happened to the management programme.

[English]

After the unprecedented floods of 1954, flood management works were taken

up in a planned manner by the States. The main thrust of managing floods in different river basins was to modify the floods through specific structural measures such as reservoirs, embankments, channel improvement, town protection and river training. Up to 1992 the main flood management works constructed are; 15,800 kms. embankments, 32,000 kms. drainage improvement and 850 towns were protected. But, I feel this is not sufficient because certain unpredictable things do happen not only in our country which is a developing country but in Europe and America also these things happen. They had floods of such a vast magnitude which we cannot even imagine. So, you cannot compete with nature.

These measures have provided a reasonable degree of protection to an area of 14 million hectares. The cost of these works is about Rs. 31,500 million. Though the expenditure on flood management works during the earlier plans was not much, yet the same was increased substantially during the Sixth and Seventh Plans. In spite of substantially increasing outlays, the flood damages continue to show increasing trends mainly due to heavy encroachments and unregulated development in flood plains.

[Translation]

People get settled there. They are warned that the area is likely to be hit by flood, but they return to the place again.

[English]

We want that a specified upraised platform should be made so that they do not have to move all the time. There are encroachments and there is something which is very much disturbing to me. Every sane person in this country should think about it. There has been too much

deforestation. Rivers bring down the silt and it spreads all around during floods. It has to be tackled on a war footing. This can be done only if all people join together.

As structural measures alone have not given the desired results, non-structural measures such as flood forecasting, flood plain zoning, flood proofing of flood prone villages and changing of cropping pattern should be given a fair trial. These measures are more cost effective. We wanted to do those things which are cost effective and at the same time more effective. We have also got the flood forecasting network.

18.00 hrs.

We have got about 157 flood-forecasting Stations which include 25 in-flow forecasting stations for providing flood forecasting and warning during the monsoon to district authorities in the State. But I want to be more specific. I am going to ask the Department of Science and Technology to find out whether they can forecast floods about eight days in advance. At the moment they are able to forecast floods only 24 hours in advance. It is too short a period. We cannot do anything.

You take the example of Punjab. Yesterday, there was a downpour in Chandigarh. There was knee-deep water. Now, take the example of Himachal Pradesh. There, about 50 people lost their lives in one go.

Then the South-West Monsoon is there. I have seen everything. In this regard I have got a very long list of each and every State with me. If you want I will read out the whole list. Last time, the number of people who had lost their lives was 567 and this time it has already risen to 608. It is very damaging. It is very heart-rending. What

can be done? These natural calamities occur time and again. We have constraint of resources.

Then the Ninth Finance Commission was constituted. The States wanted to have their own way. They had asked the Ninth Finance Commission to allocate some funds irrespective of whether there was flood or drought or any such natural calamity. We have a Calamity Relief Fund. Funds have to be released to the States on equal instalments whether natural calamities occur or not. What I did was that as soon as the States had utilised the first instalment, I released the second instalment and so on. This year, I am thinking of releasing one full year's amount in advance. But what can I do? I have nothing else left with me. So, this has to be changed. I am very much sympathetic to all my hon. Members who are asking for more and more money. But, we shall have to see that this whole method is changed. In this connection, I had requested the hon. Prime Minister, the Ninth Finance Commission and Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister, to have a re-look into this. We can do it. How will you ameliorate certain things?

Now, you take the examples of Kerala and Karnataka. The floods have revaged Kerala and Karnataka. I had been to Gujarat when there was a drought. I had also been to Gujarat when there was flood. There, I sat with the people in the hot sun, who were working in scorching heat at 50 degree centigrade. The poor kids were working there by just having *sookhi roti and bhaji*. I also ate with them. What can we do? The only thing that we can do is to plan for the better management. The Government can only try and see that the people stand on their own legs whatever may be the position. The only question is that whatever had been lost, had been lost. It is beyond

comprehension. Floods do come. Wars also do come. So, the only thing that we can do is that we can make some people realise that here is something on the basis of which they can stand on their own legs. I have been having daily briefings, weekly briefings and I ask them what medicines the people want and so on. I had already written to all the Ministries in this regard. I had written to the Ministry of Transport for construction of roads. I had also written to the Electricity Boards. I had asked all the Departments to take care of these people. We have got something in our mind. We have got other plans to help out the people. We have Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. During 1994, we had released a total sum of Rs. 1390 crore to the States. It includes the States' share and the balance of last year. As on 1.4.94, the States had with them Rs. 2833 crore and they have since spent only Rs. 410 crore out of that. Had they spent at least 50 per cent of it, I could have released the second instalment. Still, more than Rs. 2423 crore are lying with them.

They can spend this money for helping the poor people, giving them some jobs, employment, etc. I have given this understanding to them that if one district gives me specific data that they have spent more than 50 per cent of the money given by the Central Government, I am ready to release to that district the second instalment also.

Then there is Indira Vikas Yojana. Then there is also an accelerated water supply scheme. All these schemes will help them. But the main thing is about the actual grant in addition to this. The Ninth Finance Commission has said that only in the case of natural calamity being declared National calamity by the Government you cannot give more than what has been prescribed. That is the ceiling; that is the *Lakshmana*

Rekha. What to do with this?

I have told my hon. friends here that whatever I can do I will do. I can give you food. I have arranged fertilisers for them; I have also arranged seeds for them. If there is anything more to be needed, I can do that also. We will make every arrangement at this juncture. But, on the other side, if cash has to be arranged, that has to be done with the consent of the Central Government; that is not at present available. But we have to tackle it.

You have also requested. I have got a note from the Prime Minister. They are considering this fact how to tackle this problem.

I think this should satisfy all my hon. Members. Whatever else on the agriculture side is to be done, I am always at their disposal. My Ministry is at their disposal. Nothing will be left to chance. Thank you.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA) : We appreciate the sincerity of the hon. Minister and at the same time the constraint on the Agriculture Ministry. But the fact is that the funds which have been allocated as per the natural calamities relief norms, are quite inadequate to meet the situation.

Even if you refer it to the 10th Finance Commissions, it will not solve the problem. We met the Prime Minister also. He was very sympathetic our cause. I am requesting on behalf of all my friends to the hon. Speaker to kindly direct the Finance Minister to give us some funds out of his discretionary funds. This is a situation where we are requesting for your sympathy and indulgence. The Finance Minister has got discretionary fund. Some fund should be put at the disposal of the Agriculture Ministry to meet this very difficult situation. We are

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all one on this.

You are the custodian of our rights; you have to protect all of us. We are the elected representatives of the people, but you are the custodian of our rights and also democracy. You very kindly made some observations regarding the empty benches. We all supported you, Sir, we want the democracy to function well. I am again requesting you to please ask the Finance Minister to put some fund at the disposal of the Agriculture Ministry so that this very difficult situation we are able to tackle. I am making this request on behalf of all of us. (Interruptions)

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : I agree with him. In the case of Madhya Pradesh, we have asked for Rs. 200 crore, but we have got only Rs. 14 crore; that is not even 10 per cent of the amount. (Interruptions)

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Fifty thousand will be given by the Central Government from the Prime Minister's relief fund for the families of the deceased.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Out of 806 people died all over the country, 143 are from Kerala. At least Rs. 1 lakh should be given from the Prime Minister's relief fund. Even that is not coming.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : That will be done. Fifty thousand rupees are being released.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA) : We want the Minister to make a statement in this House on this matter.

[Translation]

SHRI UTTAMRAO DEORAO PATIL

(YAVATMAL) : What is the rate of share contributed by the Central Government and the State Government in the relief provided to the affected people for rehabilitation by the State Government.

[English]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Three-fourth is from the Centre and One-fourth is from the State. It is the duty and responsibility of each State to do this and the Chief Secretary is the Head of the Committee which is up to find out where to spend the money, how to spend the money and also to see that no corruption is there. We have got no agency. It is only the States who do it. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS : At present they do need rice but their most urgent need is 'medicine'. At least medicines should be provided to them.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Medicines will be dispatched. You need not worry about it.

[English]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR : Have you appointed a Committee to find out a permanent solution to this problem?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : As I have told you, it has to be a sort of a decision from four Ministries to come together. The Irrigation Department is the nodal ministry.

Now here river Brahmaputra and rivers from Nepal are also concerned and they being international rivers, all the agencies and these two States have to sort out this problem. ... (Interruptions).

SHRI A. CHARLES (TRIVANDRUM)

: Sir, according to the Ninth Finance Commission, if the calamity is of an unprecedented nature, the Government should come forward to consider it on a separate basis.

The hon. Minister has agreed that this is a calamity of unprecedented nature, so under that clause a special consideration shall be given to the State which is very badly affected due to floods and additional funds should be given to Kerala...(Interruptions).

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Sir, no assurance has come so far. The funds earmarked for this calamity for Kerala is Rs. 20 crore, but the loss estimated is about Rs. 500 crore. Sir, it is very unfortunate that after three days of discussion, we have got nothing...(Interruptions).

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES (UDUPI)
: Sir, the Agriculture Minister has said that this is a national calamity. It is for the House

to take it up and decide...(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : We are with the Members and the people from all parts of the country who are suffering from this calamity. We are sure that the Central Government and the State Governments would do their best to cope up with the situation.

The Speaker is not authorised to direct the Government in such matters under the Constitution of India. However, I am sure your voice and our feelings would be taken into account by all concerned authorities and Ministries for proper action.

The House now stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow, the 5th August, 1994 at 11.00 A.M.

18.14 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on Friday, August 5, 1994, 1994/sravana 14, 1916 (saka)