

12-09) hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO  
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC  
IMPORTANCE**

**INDIAN ARMY'S ASSISTANCE DURING  
KASHMIR FLOODS**

Shri Vajpayee: Under rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Defence to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The assistance rendered by the Indian Army to the people of Jammu and Kashmir during the recent floods."

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): Mr Speaker, Sir, a statement of 'the assistance rendered by the Indian Armed Forces to the people of Jammu and Kashmir during the recent floods' has necessarily not only to be brief, but has to be largely of a general character, having regard to the fact that, as the House knows, special considerations apply to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an operational area, and any statement of particulars and details while being accurate have to be governed by reasons of national security and the fact that troop dispositions and details, of course, are part of this consideration.

The armed forces positioned in the State have been available to render all possible aid, and it is gratifying to feel that their participation has been welcome to the people and the State Government. Because of the knowledge of the area and of previous years' conditions, the forces and their commanders were fully alive to the situation, and no time was lost in their becoming fully operative. Land communication had become impossible. Reconnaissance of the flooded area from the air was made very soon after the floods set in, by the high-ranking officers at Defence Headquarters, including Chiefs of Staff and Defence Ministry officials, along with the State authorities.

The first warning of floods in the Srinagar Valley which is generally issued when it rains heavily for about twelve hours was given at seven o'clock on the morning of 4th July last. Army Units in the area were thereupon alerted. A combined headquarters consisting of representatives of the civil authorities, the Army and the Air Force was set up at Srinagar to co-ordinate rescue and relief work and other assistance that may be required by the Armed Forces in view of the disaster that threatened. The situation appeared to deteriorate rapidly on the 6th July. Army patrols were thereupon detailed on a round-the-clock basis to watch the breaches on the banks of the river Jhelum and to strengthen weak points with sand bags etc.

In the Jammu sector, the flood warning was issued by the State Government on the 5th July at 7-15 A.M. Troops were deployed immediately to render assistance to the civil authorities and to strengthen bunds wherever required. The Army prepared for evacuation of civilians in the low lying areas and the issue of boats and other requisites. While general particulars of damages, to highways, bridges and other structures and places may as far as possible be given, description has necessarily certain limitations in regard to this part of India

In the Valley, Army engineers brought back to use four important roads. Troops were deployed for the evacuation of civilians and both Army road transport and boats were detailed for anti-flood measures. Tens of thousands of sand bags from Army stocks were diverted to meet the fury of the flood and to save important areas and points from disaster. Flour had to be released from limited Army stocks for urgent and immediate relief to flood victims. Similarly, tens of thousands of gallons of fuel had to be loaned to the trade to meet the requirements of the public and of the tourists who were stranded in many-

[Shri Krishna Menon]

places. The Army Medical Authorities had to give attention to civilian cases and casualties amounting to more than eight thousand, to meet the threat of the epidemic that often follows a flood. T.B., small-pox and anti-cholera inoculations on an extensive scale had to be undertaken by the Armed Forces Medical Services. Similarly, preventive measures had to be undertaken in the villages affected by the flood, by DDT spraying and other methods on a large scale. Some eight medical teams had to be despatched to various points in the Srinagar area.

In the Rajauri-Poonch area land slides, washed away roads and other damages had to be repaired and restoration work done, and a number of bridges had to be constructed within short periods.

In the Jammu area also, Army personnel had to be employed for similar work and for making good the breaches in the banks and protective bunds of the river Tawi.

Army engineers and troops were deployed to assist to bring into commission the Pathankot-Srinagar road which had been breached in many places. Six major bridges had to be constructed, the work being done on a non-stop basis until completion. A number of other bridges and culverts had also to be similarly restored at the same time. The town of Banihal and the Banihal bridge which faced danger of being washed away was protected by counter-measures and fortunately, both the town and the bridge were saved.

The extent of the damage and the volume of consequent assistance may be stated in general terms as follows:

In and around Srinagar, a total length of nearly three hundred miles of roadways and breaches, partial or full destruction of communications at over fifty places including some eighteen bridges and culverts had to be effectively dealt with and very soon

In the Rajauri-Poonch area, similarly, the damage which had to be restored extended to twenty-one miles of roads, including seven bridges which were completely destroyed by the floods.

In and around Jammu, one hundred miles of roads and tracks in over thirty-seven places had to be restored.

In far off Leh, one bridge, and ten miles of roads suffered destruction and were repaired.

Srinagar airfield which is on high ground, and therefore, escapes floods, however, was isolated on account of the damage to the roads leading to it, thus creating a problem in respect of the tourists that had to be repatriated. These roads, where possible of repair, were repaired, and where it was impossible, diversions were built. The Indian Air Force carried out many sorties for reconnaissance of the flood-affected areas to enable counter-measures to be planned and taken. They were also able to respond to requirements of air-lift essential supplies of Red Cross stores and other relief.

Government would not like to give the impression to the House that the Armed Forces alone were available and rendered the required assistance to meet the menace and the harm inflicted by the catastrophe. The resources of the State Government were both extensively and promptly organised under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and manned both by the volunteers and official personnel. The resources of the Central Government were also available to the State. All necessary branches of administration of the Central Government, more especially, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Communications in a large and considerable measure were engaged in meeting the havoc

The Indian Airlines Corporation carried out as many as 162 additional flights between Srinagar and Jammu Pathankot. They airlifted some four thousand passengers in addition to their normal flights.

Government are glad to report to the House that the personnel of the Armed Forces in addition to their assigned duties responded as citizens to the aid and succour of the afflicted people, voluntarily, and in considerable measure.

I, however, regret to inform the House that some twenty-two Army personnel lost their lives. I feel sure that the House would like me to convey to the next-of-kin and their families of these dead men our abundant sympathy, and also our appreciation of the prompt and spontaneous response of Army personnel in all ranks to render assistance to the civilian population—men, women and children—to the best of their ability.

The account that has now been given, as required by this occasion, has to be restricted to the assistance rendered by the Armed Forces. The House is already aware both of the extent of damage and the extent of reparation and relief rendered by Governments, State and Central; and by voluntary authorities and organisations, both from the statements made in this House and from the reports that have appeared in the press.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure, as the Defence Minister has said, our sympathies go forth to the families of the twenty-two or twenty-three members of the Armed Forces who have lost their lives. We also appreciate the excellent work that has been done by the Armed Forces, and we hope that if necessary they will continue to do so.

12-18 hrs.

**MOTION RE: RISE IN SUGAR  
PRICES**

श्री कुसुमवन्त राय (शेरी) : माननीय अध्यक्ष महोदय, जो प्रस्ताव मेरे सामने है उस को मैं उपस्थित करना चाहता हूँ :

“कि यह सभा चीनी के बितरण के बारे में सरकार की नीति पर चिन्ता प्रकट करती है और सरकार से अनुरोध करती है कि वह चीनी के मूल्य में वृद्धि और चीनी के व्यापारियों द्वारा मुनाफाखोरी को रोकने के लिये उपयुक्त कार्यवाही करे।”

श्रीमान्, मैं आप का बहुत आभारी हूँ कि आप ने मेरे प्रस्ताव को स्वीकार कर के मुझ को विवाद में हिस्सा लेने का अवसर दिया। साथ ही साथ मैं माननीय मंत्री पार्लियामेन्टरी अफेयर्स का भी आभारी हूँ कि उन्होंने ने इस विवाद के लिये समय निकाला।

हमारी सरकार, कांग्रेस सरकार, सन् १९४७ में बनी थी और उस के बाद से दो साल ऐसे आये हैं कि जिन में शक्कर के मिस मालिकों ने और शक्कर का रोजगार करने वालों ने उपभोक्ताओं की पूरी पूरी जूट की। सन् १९४९ में ऐसा अवसर आया और उस समय भी इस सभा में इस प्रश्न पर विवाद हुआ था। उस समय हमारे वर्तमान मंत्री जी यकी नहीं थे। वह एक साधारण सदस्य थे जैसाकि मैं इस समय हूँ। और उस समय उस विवाद में बोलते हुए उन्होंने ने कहा था :

“The consumer was fleeced of no less than a sum of Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 crores, when the Government sat calling conferences, meetings, and committees, when every housewife was worried