

SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR : Government is always responsive and willing to consider any good suggestion from any Member of the House, particularly from the Opposition.

Earthquake in Cachar District of Assam

***21. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether an earthquake rocked the Cachar district of Assam recently;

(b) if so, the loss of life and property suffered as a result thereof;

(c) the relief measures provided; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to rehabilitate the victims of the earthquake ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : (a) According to available information certain parts of Cachar district were affected by an earthquake during the night of 30th and 31st December, 1984.

(b) As per reports received from the Government of Assam the losses to life and property are as under :

(i) No. of human lives lost	13
(ii) No. of cattle lost	1
(iii) No. of villages affected	125
(iv) No. of houses damaged	3000
(v) No. of bridges damaged	2
(vi) No. of timber bridges damaged	6
(vii) Estimated value of property damaged	Rs. 40 00 lakhs

(c) & (d) The State Government have reported that the next of kin of the deceased have been given ex-gratia grant at the rate of Rs. 1000/- per adult and Rs.

500/-per minor. However, the State Government proposes to enhance this assistance to Rs. 5000/- per adult and Rs. 2500/- per minor. Injured persons have also been suitably compensated. About six hundred affected families have been accommodated in six relief camps. Free blankets, tarpullines and other essential commodities have been distributed to the affected people. The State Government have reported that house to house survey to assess the extent of damage to dwelling units/institutions is under progress.

At the request of the State Government a sum of Rs. 5.00 crores has been sanctioned as a ways and means advance on 8-1-1985 by the Government of India for taking up urgent relief and rehabilitation works.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Sir, I must congratulate the Minister and the Prime Minister because they have acted very promptly to help the victims of the earthquake. I would like to know whether any modernised warning system has been provided in the country to fore-warn the earthquake victims so, that they may shift to a safe place. Secondly, due to different geological formations this type of natural disaster happens in which there are four formations—ancient formation, old formation, Gondwana formation and Rockfeller formation. Secondly, if we entrust the job to NSRA agency based at Hyderabad we can know where the actual disaster will happen.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : I agree with the hon. Member that advance information should be given to the earthquake prone areas but so far as it has not been possible to evolve a fool-proof system by which we can really envisage the possibilities and the extent of earthquake. But I would like to tell the House that the country has been divided into five seismic zones. Assam is one zone in which earthquakes are expected quite frequently. In addition to this there are also 12 seismological observations in the North Eastern region and we propose to set up five more during the Seventh Five-Year Plan to make it possible that we could give some information about the earthquakes in the affected zones.

Sir, this particular district of Cachar is known to be an earthquake prone area. Adequate assistance has already been provided. We are waiting for a detailed report from the State Government. As soon as the report is received and if any more steps are required to be taken we will do the needfull.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Sir, I congratulate the Minister for giving a detailed information but generally when there is a big reservoir in our country due to silting the earthquake comes within a radius of 50 km in 30-40 years. The Minister has admitted that Cachar district is in earthquake prone zone. Will the Minister enlighten the House after how many years this particular area is a victim of earthquake and what preventive measures involving the professional expertise like the NSRA, Hyderabad have been taken to eradicate the zones of formation which are prone to earthquake in our country.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : Sir, I am sorry I cannot compete with the Hon. Member in technical knowledge.

But, I have this information with me.

This area has been affected earlier by an earthquake of great intensity on the 10th January, 1869 (Magnitude 7.5) when it caused extensive damage in Cachar district.

As the region lies close to the Dawki and Haflong faults, occurrence of recent earthquake was not unexpected.

In fact, the whole of north-east India lies in seismically active region where two of the greatest earthquakes in the world— (i) June 1897 (Magnitude 8.7) in Shillong Plateau and (ii) in August, 1950 (Magnitude 8.5) in north-east Assam have occurred. The occurrence of these earthquakes is attributed to the collision of Indian and Eurasian plateaus.

Regarding availability of latest technology, I have already mentioned that we propose to have five more centres in the north-eastern zone so that we can be in a position to know at least something fundamental about the observations regarding such earthquakes.

Procurement of Foodgrains by FCI

***22. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA :** Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of foodgrains procured by Government through Food Corporation of India and other agencies during the 1984 rabi and kharif crops;

(b) the storage facility available for these foodgrains;

(c) whether foodgrains have also been stored in the open;

(d) whether Government have a perspective plan for maintaining high level of foodgrains stocks; and

(e) if so, whether there is a corresponding plan for storing this grain safely ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH) : (a) A total quantity of 16.24 million tonnes of foodgrains has been procured during 1984-85 rabi and kharif marketing season upto 16-1-1985.

(b) The covered storage capacity available with the Food Corporation of India, owned and hired taken together, was 18.98 million tonnes as on 30-11-1984.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir.

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply to part (c) is in the affirmative. So, I would like to know what is the total quantity of loss suffered from being stored in the open. At the same time I would like to know this from the hon. Minister. The reply of the hon. Minister to part (d) is also in the affirmative. My question is this. Is there any plan to construct storage facilities at sub-divisional and block levels ?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : There is a normal programme as well as a crash programme for building additional capacity and the policy is to try to set up capacities right up to the district levels, as was earlier ordered by the Late Prime Minister under her 12 point programme