

SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN (TAMIL NADU): Sir.

SHRIN. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Sir.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा): बहुत थोड़ा टाईम है। आप सिर्फ एंजोसिएट कीजिएगा। अभी बहुत से मੈम्बर्स बोलने के लिए बाकी हैं।

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM (TAMIL NADU): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, so far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, there is water scarcity not only in Kamraj district but also in Kanyakumari district. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, it faces two problems. One of the problems related to Krishna water. In this connection, the latest position is that the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu recently inaugurated a function for releasing Krishna water. But, in spite of the inauguration, that water has not reached Tamil Nadu. Till date, we are not getting a single drop of water from the river Krishna. The reason is that a lot of damage was caused to water channels.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA): You just associate yourself with it.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Sir, I would like to request the Central Government to see that the engineers set right whatever damage was caused to the water channels. I would also request the Government to send a common-team to inspect the Krishna water so that the Krishna water is immediately released to Tamil Nadu.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA): You kindly associate yourself with it. I have six more names before me.

Drought situation in Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu

*SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN (TAMIL NADU): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, first of all, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise an important matter.

With a sense of paralysing calamity, I bring to the notice of the Centre a serious drought situation prevailing in the Ramanathapuram and other southern districts of Tamilnadu.

*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

Ramanathapuram is a backward district and majority people living in the district belong to Scheduled Castes and backward classes. About 90% people live below the poverty line. Nearly 50 years after independence, people of Ramanathapuram district are reeling under severe drought due to non-availability of water for drinking as well as irrigation. No alternative arrangement has been made to provide adequate water to this drought prone area. The people depend only on rain water for their needs.

Since rains have failed continuously for several years, the people of Ramanathapuram district are in grip of drought and famine. They have no water, no food and no clothings. They are living in utter misery. The farmers had spent lot of money for raising crops that have failed due to drought. They are unable to pay back the loans they have taken from banks and money-lenders. Unless the centre comes forward to help them, they would have to undergo worse kind of turbulence.

Sir, the whole district of Ramanathanpuram looks like a desert. The fury of drought is writ large every where. Pilgrims from the north proceeding to Rameswaram pass through Ramanathapuram district, are pained to see the plight of people living there. Even the pilgrims do not get drinking water. Such is the condition of drought there. Unless the centre takes steps on warfooting to tide over the water crisis, the situation will turn out to be very pathetic condition.

The centre has recently appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Hanumantha Rao to study the feasibility of linking all the major rivers of India. While welcoming this move, I wish to point out a long pending demand for harnessing the water of the west flowing rivers of Kerala for use in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Over 230 TMC water of both Pambai and Achankoil rivers are flowing waste into Arabian sea every year. If these rivers are diverted towards Tamilnadu, the surplus water of these rivers could be fruitfully used in Ramanathapuram, Kamarajar and also Pasumpon districts. Our beloved leader Dr. Puratchni Thalaivi was negotiating with Kerala when our ADMK was in power. The Centre should not waste time in

taking necessary steps to divert the course of these rivers to take the surplus water to Ramanathapuram and other southern districts. Otherwise, Ramanathapuram district will turn out to be another Kalahandi of Orissa. At a time when Tamilnadu is fighting for 5 TMC of water from Cauvery, 230TMC water is flowing waste in Kerala. Paucity of funds cannot be cited as a reason. Because, every year the Government is spending crores of rupees on drought relief. It will involve only lesser amount for executing the scheme to divert these rivers.

Sir, we keep saying "from Kanyakumari to Kashmir India is one" and that we are all children of Mother India. But unfortunately, we don't show it in practice. Water is surplus in one region and there is drought in other region. Ramanathapuram has been named after Lord Ram. At least for this sake, the Govt. should look into the welfare of the people here. There is no water, there is no factory. So the idle people create problems and fight over castes and religion. I appeal to the centre to waive all the loans and taxes of the people of Ramanathapuram district. The Government should provide drinking water through alternative source and also provide financial assistance and all other helps to the farmers enabling them to raise crops again. Ramanathapuram district should be declared as drought stricken area. The people of Ramanathapuram district should be provided with rice, pulses, sugar, kerosene and other essential commodities immediately. I, once again, urge upon the centre to swing into action and help the people of Ramanathapuram and other southern districts.

*SHRI S. MUTHUMANI (TAMILNADU): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I appeal to the Centre to come out with a white paper containing the special schemes to provide relief to the drought stricken districts in the country. I have another pertinent point to make. The post of Chairman of Cauvery Waters Tribunal has not yet been filled. People of Tamilnadu feel that there is something shady about it. Our revered leader, former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi has been demanding that the Chairman should be appointed without delay.

I hope the centre will soon appoint the Chairman for the Tribunal. There has been a long pending demand for harnessing the water of the West flowing rivers in Kerala for use in Tamilnadu. The centre should set up a Parliamentary Committee to undertake a detailed study of the matter so that the scheme is completed on war footing. I support the demands of my esteemed friend.

Construction of a bridge on the river Zia-BharaH near Tezpur in Assam

SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to raise a most urgent and important matter with regard to surface transport problem in the State of Assam. The Ministry of Surface Transport took up the matter of construction of an RCC bridge across Zia-Bhorli, a tributary of the river Brahmaputra in Tezpur Lok Sabha constituency which would shorten the travelling distance between Guwahati, the capital of Assam and Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh by 39 kms. on National Highway No. 52. This refers to Unstarred Question No. 378 dated 28th April, 1993, in the Rajya Sabha and the Minister's reply thereto. Later, the Surface Transport Ministry called for global tender for construction of the bridge on Build, Operate and Return basis. It was estimated to cost Rs. 75 crores. The public demand for the bridge arose in 1930s, followed by a public agitation for the past 17 years and an assurance was given for taking up the project after the survey and determination of the alignment was finalised by seismographical aerial survey funded by the North-Eastern Council two decades ago. The Surface Transport Minister assured the State Chief Minister and the PWD Minister in 1994 that the Central Fund would get assistance from the Asian Road Development Bank financed by the world Bank. All assurances have proved futile. In the latest package of development, funds for the North-Eastern States were announced by the hon. Prime Minister in his last visit to the region. No provision was made for this bridge project which is in the most backward and troubled area of the north bank of the Brahmaputra Valley. It is supposed to provide a life-line from Bihata-CI on the west

*English translation of the Original speech delivered in Tamil.