

REFERENCE TO THE SEVERE FAMINE CONDITIONS IN SOME PARTS OF RAJASTHAN

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA (Rajasthan): Madam Deputy Chairman, the need for a Special Mention about the severe famine conditions prevailing over extensive areas in Rajasthan has become imperative. Delayed monsoon, long dry spells in between and uneven distribution of the scanty rain, have all combined to cause one of the worst ever and most widespread famines in the State. Out of the 27 districts of Rajasthan 23 have been affected by the famine, and out of a total number of 38,150 villages in the State 75 per cent have been stricken. This involves two crore people and three crore animals. In a large area the drought caused acute shortage of drinking water and of fodder. As a result of the drought the water level has gone down and a majority of wells in the drought stricken areas have become dry and they will have to be deepened by ten to fifteen feet in a majority of the cases. It is expected that Rs. 500 crores will be needed to repair the damages caused by the famine—Rs. 350 crores for relief works, Rs. 50 crores for saving animals and the balance for miscellaneous other works. In the drought affected areas kharif crop losses have been estimated to be between 75 and 100 per cent. The situation is alarming as drought has struck large parts of Rajasthan for the second year in succession and this is the fourth famine during the last five years. Jaisalmer is one of the worst affected areas. This district has been experiencing famine continuously for the last eight years the rainfall having steadily diminished over the period. As a result of repeated occurrence of famine in Rajasthan the people of drought-prone districts are giving up agriculture as a means of livelihood. During famine they have been forced to sell their livestock and smuggle them across the border Rajasthan has some plans to produce cattle feed. Their production should be increased to help the

cattle. Besides, if the Government could consider transporting fodder free or at nominal charges as has been done on a few occasions in the past, it will be of great help. The problem is acute and has assumed such enormous proportions that it demands a supreme effort on the part of both the Government of India and the State Government to relieve the people of their suffering.

SHRI B. L. PANWAR (Rajasthan): Madam, I associate myself with the demand for urgent famine relief measures in Rajasthan.

REFERENCE TO THE REPORTED DEATH OF SOME ARMY OFFICERS DURING THEIR UNSUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION TO MOUNT EVEREST

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharashtra): Madam, I wish to bring to the notice of the House, through you, about the unsuccessful expedition by the Indian Army to climb Mount Everest. In this expedition five of our top Army climbers died. Normally in an adventure line this deaths are bound to take place. But the point is whether this was due to negligence. I am given to understand that this army expedition was a disaster right from start to finish. There was very poor planning, the decision to climb Mount Everest was taken just a few months back; Proper training was not imparted and proper equipment was not available for the assault on Mt. Everest. It is indeed surprising that this should have happened to the Indian Army which is known for its meticulous training, precision, hard work, diligence, etc. I do not know who gave the orders that they should climb Mt. Everest. Out of the five people killed, only one died because of a fall. Maj. Kumar died falling from a height of 5,000' to 6000'. But the rest four including Maj. Bahuguna, were frozen to death. They did not have proper equip-