

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know that everybody from this side of the House stood up. I know that. I have noticed that. All those names may be added. The Minister also supported. He said it will be taken up. The Minister also did not oppose it. No problem. Now, Mr. Tiruchi Siva, your notice under Rule 267 has been converted into Zero Hour. So, only Zero Hour time for you...*(Interruptions)*... Digvijaya Singhji, you raise it at 2.00 p.m.

Agitation by farmers of Tamil Nadu

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, despite being an agricultural country, the woes and miseries of farmers are increasing day by day. Sir, the State of Tamil Nadu has been declared a drought-hit State. The farmers are agitating in Tamil Nadu as well as at Jantar Mantar for the past fifteen days and in Tamil Nadu for the past two months. Sir, 200 farmers have committed suicide. The demands, Sir, are very simple—the loans that they have secured from the banks have to be waived. This is the first demand. Secondly, the State Government has requested for an assistance of ₹ 40,000 crore from the NDRF whereas a high-level Committee has recommended and the Government has sanctioned only ₹ 1,804 crore as drought relief fund, which is peanuts to the requirement there. Moreover, there is not even a single paise given as compensation for the loss of production in the areas where sowing has already been done. Sir, it is a very, very serious condition. The Finance Minister gave graciously an audience yesterday to the farmers. He gave some explanation. It was consoling but no solution is given. What we request is the constitution of the Cauvery Management Board and linking of rivers which is very essential. Apart from these, waiver of loans is the foremost. The banks are taking very stringent actions, strangling the already suffering farmers, forcing them to repay the loans. So, instructions have to be given by the Government to the banks that the farmers should not be squeezed in their repayment. We have requested two other things. Around 15 lakh farmers have insured 31 lakh acres for ₹ 8,878 crore. The Government can give instructions to the insurance companies to immediately disburse the insured amounts. That, at least, will help some farmers there.

Sir, foremost of all, there is another programme by the Central Government, AIBP, Accelerated Integrated Benefit Programme, and it is extended as a loan assistance to the States. The States can't implement it given the available resources with them. So, I request the Government to release adequate funds to the AIBP and to give instructions to the insurance companies to immediately disperse the amount and to waive the loans which the farmers have already got from banks. The banks should be instructed that they should not strangle the already suffering farmers. Thank you very much. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI A. NAVANEETHAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI K. K. RAGESH (Kerala): Sir, I too associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I too associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Telangana): Sir, I too associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI R. S. BHARATHI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I too associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI T. K. S. ELANGO VAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I too associate myself with the mention made by the hon. Member.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri D. Raja, then Shri T. K. Rangarajan. Both have given notices. Take two minutes each. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, my notice is under Rule 267. I draw the attention of the entire House and the Government to the fact that agriculture in the country is in a deep crisis. The farmers are passing through an unprecedented distress. The plight of Tamil Nadu farmers is miserable. Tamil Nadu farmers have come to Jantar Mantar; they are agitating for more than two weeks. They have met the President, they have met the Finance Minister, they have met the Agriculture Minister and several MPs have met them. But their plight continues. They are asking for loan waiver. I make a concrete proposal to the Government. The Government can take a stand on loan waiver for farmers. You are taking decisions for loan waiver in many other sections. But, here, in the case of farmers, the Union Government can take a categorical position for giving a loan waiver to the farmers. It will help Tamil Nadu farmers also. This is number one. Secondly, there is a project called Hydrocarbon Project. Recently, the Petroleum Ministry has signed MoUs with private companies. The farmers are agitating in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu. They are afraid that the ground water level will go down and it would lead to depletion of ground water. It will further affect the agriculture. The issue is before the Union Government. The Union Government can assure the Tamil Nadu farmers that the Government of India will not implement the Hydrocarbon Project unless it is accepted by the farmers. Why are you forcing it on the farmers? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your time is over, please sit down. Now, Shri T. K. Rangarajan.

SHRI T. K. RANGARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, thank you. The Tamil Nadu farmers are facing a very grave situation. This situation was there 140 years back. Today, it is the 15th day of some farmers agitating here. Some Gurudwaras are helping them. Delhi people are helping the Tamil people. But, unfortunately, the Home Ministry, the police, they are threatening them. They have asked them to vacate. I request the Home Ministry not to do that. It is purely a genuine struggle. They have come here for relief. Why should police intervene? I ask the Home Minister not to do that because that area has been allowed by the Parliament to do agitations. The demand is very genuine. The BBC is broadcasting it. Lakhs of people have seen that. In Tamil Nadu, there is no drinking water; there is no fodder for cattle. This situation should not continue. We met the Finance Minister. Sitaramji and I, and also the representatives of farmers, met him. But the point is that there is no result. There must be results. Otherwise, entire Tamil Nadu will agitate against the Centre. The Centre should help Tamil Nadu. This is the time, please. Loan waiver is a must. Water should be supplied for drinking purpose. There must be war-footing arrangements by the Centre, otherwise, things will go from bad to worse.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. ...(Interruptions)... Yechuryji, you associate yourself. ...(Interruptions)..

श्री नीरज शेखर (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ। सिर्फ तमिलनाडु नहीं, सारे देश के किसानों का कर्ज माफ होना चाहिए। ...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, one minute. ...(Interruptions)... I met these farmers here when they were under protest at Jantar Mantar. Unfortunately, Sir, the country is used to farmers' suicides. We know the situation. But, what I have seen with them are live rats. They say, "This is the only food we have." That is what they were saying. ...(Interruptions)... This is the state of India today when our Anadatas are forced to eat mice and rats saying that there is no way they can survive otherwise. Sir, I ask this Government, and through you, I am appealing the Government that you can waive the NPAs for rich corporates but you cannot waive loans of poor farmers who are committing suicides. This is something that is not acceptable. It is only a fraction of what you are waiving of the rich people. You waive this, save our *Anadatas*, save Indian agriculture and Indian farmers; otherwise, there is no future for my country. Sir, it is a very serious matter. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Telangana): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

श्रीमती जया बच्चन (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करती हूँ।

श्री हुसैन दलवाई (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री पी. एल. पुनिया (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री प्रेम चन्द गुप्ता (झारखंड): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री किरनमय नन्दा (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री नरेंद्र बुढानिया (राजस्थान): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

डा. चंद्रपाल सिंह यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी माननीय सदस्य द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ। हम सभी लोग इस पर चिंता व्यक्त करते हैं। यह बड़ा सीरियस मैटर है। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We also associate ourselves with the issue raised by the hon. Member. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I actually saw a photograph. ...*(Interruptions)*... Hon. Members, I actually saw a photograph of a farmer with a rat in his mouth. ...*(Interruptions)*... I think the Government should talk to them. ...*(Interruptions)*... The Government should have a dialogue with them. ...*(Interruptions)*... I hope you will have a talk with them. ...*(Interruptions)*... Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman is saying something.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to respond on a very sensitive issue which several hon. Members have raised. I wish to put on record some of the responses. The Government is absolutely sensitive and is seized of the matter. Several hon. Members have taken appointments with Ministers. Shri D. Raja and Sivaji mentioned it. The Finance Minister has met the delegation of the farmers who are protesting of the Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohanji has met and so has Uma Bhartiji. There are several issues which are together, and rightly, being put in this matter and all of which are being given separate attention, like on agriculture and irrigation-related

and insurance-related matters. Crops sown, which are not getting insurance cover, is being taken up very seriously because the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana clearly covers for sown in the field and lost, just after sowing loss, post harvest loss and even after-harvest loss. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please listen.

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: So, there are several aspects to the insurance. In fact, let me put on record that when I went on a particular DigiDhan Mela visit to Madurai, I sat with the District Magistrate, the Collector and looked at the coverage of insurance for farmers. There are issues, I admit. There are issues about coverage, there are issues about farmers not getting included in the scheme although they are deserving it. So, on the insurance, definitely, the Agriculture Minister and the Government together are working to see how best the coverage can be given. That is one thing about the farmers' insurance on which issues have been raised. On Cauvery Management Water Board, which has repeatedly been raised also, the Government is working. Uma Bharatiji is fully seized of the matter and we are responding to that. Again, talking about Neduvasal, I have myself been a part of the Ministry together with Dharmendra Pradhanji and Pon. Radhakrishnan, who is also a Minister elected from Tamil Nadu, along with the delegation which came from Pudukkottai to talk about it, namely, as to what concerns those people have about their land, the prospects of agriculture in future, what is hydrocarbon exploration going to do, etc. And, all these have been completely discussed. The Minister, Dharmendra Pradhanji has assured that a team will go and talk to the affected people address their concerns, before anything happens. The MoU signing has been absolutely explained. It is a commercial contract to find out who has the qualification to do it. It is only a Memorandum of Understanding, after which the State Government also has various steps to take before the actual activity commences. So, to think that this is already violative of what the Minister has committed to the people who came and met them is absolutely not the basis. I would like to assure the Member that this concern about Hydrocarbon project in Neduvasal has been, in detail, spoken by the Minister, and since then, issues are getting included in this. Sir, I have I sought your permission which you granted me, to address, to let the Members know about the position whether it is Neduvasal, whether it is the insurance coverage or whether it is farming-related problem. And, of course, not taking more of your time, I have a complete list of how much has been released by the Government of India for Tamil Nadu. There has not been a denial of what has to be given. In fact, one point I would like to draw your attention to is, in 2015-16, SDRF and NDRF, that is, the National Disaster Relief Fund moneys which have to go to Tamil Nadu, ₹ 1,000 crores are being released as against the allocation under SDRF.

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल: सर, हम लोगों के भी ज़ीरो ऑवर में मुद्दे लगे हुए हैं। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: So, I assure those Members...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल: सर, इस पर डिबेट करा लीजिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... सर, इस पर अभी डिबेट शुरू करवा दीजिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... किसानों पर अभी डिबेट शुरू करवा दीजिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI T. K. RANGARAJAN: Sir, in the State of Tamil Nadu... ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right, Shri Rangarajan, please don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: The point that I want to give here, in front of all the Members, is that the Government of India has been meeting all the delegations, whether it is concerning Neduvasal or the farmer's agitation, and I would like the people of Tamil Nadu...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल: सर, किसानों पर अभी डिबेट शुरू करवा दीजिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... जब मंत्री जी ने इस पर डिबेट शुरू कर दी, तो हम लोग भी अभी डिबेट शुरू कर सकते हैं। ...*(व्यवधान)*... सर, इस पर डिबेट होनी चाहिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... सर, इस पर डिबेट होनी चाहिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: Sir, I just want to assure the people of Tamil Nadu, on the issues which are being raised by the hon. Members, that Tamil Nadu is getting the due recognition and.... ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All of you please sit down. That's enough. No more questions. Sit down. Sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर (हिमाचल प्रदेश): सर, किसानों के लिए कुछ नहीं हुआ है। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, wherever.. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's enough. Sit down. You are not permitted. Shri Tapan Kumar Sen, you are not permitted. Sit down. I have only a request that the hon. Members who have taken it up along with the hon. Minister should convince the farmers who are agitating so that they will wind up and close their agitation. That is the point.

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल: तो किसानों का कर्जा माफ करें। ...*(व्यवधान)*... किसानों की कर्जा माफी की घोषणा करें। ...*(व्यवधान)*... किसानों की कर्जा माफी की घोषणा करें। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री हुसैन दलवाई: सर,...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, you asked the Government to waive off the loans of the farmers and the farmers will go back from Delhi. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Whatever she could say, she said. Non-waiver is another question.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA (Himachal Pradesh): Sir, what we have to say is, they must fulfil the assurance and they must respond to the demand that they waive off the loans of the farmers.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; that only the Finance Minister can say.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, your request asking us to plead the farmers to go back will succeed only the moment the Government announces the loan waiver. Then, they will go back. Let them announce the loan waiver. Then, they will go back.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, I said that the Government should also cooperate. Anyhow, the Finance Minister has to take a decision. She cannot do anything.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: You tell them to do it, Sir. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री उपसभापति: आप बैठ जाइए। आप बैठ जाइए। ...(व्यवधान)... She cannot say more than this. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल: माननीय उपसभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने इतनी देर जवाब दिया। ...(व्यवधान)... माननीय मंत्री जी ने इतनी देर जवाब दिया, उन्होंने तमाम उपाय बताये, लेकिन कर्जा माफी का मुद्दा सबसे बड़ा है। उस पर तो वे कुछ बोलीं नहीं। ...(व्यवधान)... किसानों की कर्जा माफी की घोषणा होनी चाहिए। ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Nareshji, ...(Interruptions)... Now, please sit down. Hon. Members, for non-waiver, do you think that a Minister can stand up and say that loan waiver is agreed! How can it be?

श्री सतीश चंद्र मिश्रा (उत्तर प्रदेश): उन्होंने पूरे देश की बात कही है। ...(व्यवधान)... उन्होंने जवाब में कहा है कि ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: When the Finance Minister comes, I can tell you, at 2.00 p.m. when we take up the Finance Bill, I will allow one of you to raise this issue, not now. Sit down. Not now. That is over. Not now. Now, let us take up Zero Hour submissions. ...(Interruptions)... Shri Vivek Gupta. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister is sitting here. ...(Interruptions)... Will the hon. Finance Minister make this announcement at 2.00 p.m.? ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. ...(Interruptions)... You can ask that question at that time. Then, he will give a reply. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: You ask the hon. Finance Minister to come prepared. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Vivek Gupta. ...*(Interruptions)*... You can ask this to the Finance Minister, not this Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*... She replied whatever she can. ...*(Interruptions)*... She replied to the extent possible. ...*(Interruptions)*... Shri Vivek Gupta. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री नीरज शेखर: सर, वित्त मंत्री जी मना कर चुके हैं।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Neeraj Shekharji, sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... Shri Vivek Gupta. You start speaking. Mr. Neeraj Shekhar, it is not going on record. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री नीरज शेखर: *

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Nothing else will go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Neeraj Shekhar, sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... You speak. It is going on record.

Need for ban on electronic gadgets inside aircraft cabin in flights from some countries

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, recently, the US and the UK airports banned all electronic items larger than mobile phones, like tablets, laptops and DVD players from being taken into the cabin of airplane.

Through you, Sir, I would request that our country also review this arrangement, because we are also on the high terrorist threat. But the larger issue here is, everyday different guidelines are being issued by different airlines. Some airlines say, 'You can take tablets inside.' Some airlines say, 'You have to check your tablet.' So, there are no uniform guidelines being issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the airlines are creating so much of confusion at airports. When you go to security check counter, you will be sent back and we have to go back and check our luggage. So, there is utter chaos at airports.

Sir, through you, I wish to request the Government and the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation to look into this problem.

The bigger problem is: There are vacancies of about 2,500 CISF staff, according to various airports, making our airports more vulnerable. Sir, 26 hyper sensitive airports are still not covered by the CISF and we don't know who are handling security there. Various travel advisories are issued by other countries, but we seem to be lagging behind it. Whenever a ban is imposed, I would like the Government

* Not recorded.