

Devastation caused by cyclone 'Ockhi'

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, Sir. The Ockhi Cyclone hit the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep on 30th November. It has caused huge devastation. It has robbed the livelihood of thousands of fishermen and farming community in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep also. Scores of fishermen died. Hundreds of fishermen are still missing. The Government of Tamil Nadu, the Government of Kerala and the Union Territory Administration are struggling to find out the missing fishermen. Sir, thousands of rubber trees have fallen. Thousands of banana trees have fallen. The farming community in the coastal belt stands thoroughly devastated. Since the Leader of the House is sitting here and he is also the Finance Minister of this country he will take a note of this. I hope the Prime Minister who is visiting those areas today will make some announcements. However, I take this opportunity to ask the Government : Why can't you declare this disaster as a national calamity? What prevents you from doing so? That is a genuine demand made in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This disaster must be treated as a national calamity. The Centre should extend adequate financial assistance to the States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and to Lakshadweep.

I would like to raise one more issue which is related to the fishermen. Millions of fishermen are passing through huge distress; and their sufferings are not being addressed properly by the Government. I think the time has come for the House to take a note of it, and the Government should take a note of it. We should have a separate Ministry for the Fisheries to look after the issues of fishermen. These two concrete issues which I have raised, the Government should respond to. Number one, why is the Government not declaring it as a national calamity? Number two, why can't the Government think of forming a separate Ministry for the fishing community? Fishermen are our citizens, and they are being treated as sea tribes. If we are interested in the welfare of tribal people..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raja, time is over. It will not go on record also. Mr. K.K. Ragesh to associate. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री के. रहमान खान (कर्णाटक): महोदय, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

† جناب کے۔ رحمان خان کرناٹک: میں خود کو اس موضوع سے سمبڈ کرتا ہوں۔

श्री नीरज शेखर (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री राम कुमार कश्यप (हरियाणा): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

†Transliteration in Urdu script.

श्री किरनमय नन्दा (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री संजीव कुमार (झारखंड): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री माजीद मेमन (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से संबद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by my hon. friend.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES (Karnataka): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI R.S. BHARATHI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA (Assam): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN (Maharashtra): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by my hon. colleague.

SHRI T.K.S. ELANGO VAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue mentioned by the hon. Member.

SHRI ABDUL WAHAB (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI TAP AN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI RANVIJAY SINGH JUDEV (Chhattisgarh): Sir, I also associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We all associate ourselves with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All the Members who have raised their hands, their names will be added as associated. I can't recollect immediately all the names. Whoever has raised his hand; his name should be shown as associated. Having associated with the issue raised by Shri Raja with concern their names will go on record.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): It is a serious issue. The Central Government should address the issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why the hon. Prime Minister himself has gone there. For the sake of the House, with little knowledge and understanding of the issue, I can say only one thing. There is a misconception among the people that a particular calamity can be declared as a natural calamity. That was the past thing. But subsequently on the National Calamity Relief Fund and the State Calamity Relief Fund, there was a discussion at the national level. Then, certain parameters have been decided. Accordingly, wherever the damage is more, the team goes there and assesses the situation. It comes back and reports. There is a high-level Committee of the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry. They will sit together and decide. Anyhow, the Finance Minister is here. I hope that he is taking note of the serious issue, and whatever is needed will be done. Thank you. Next Mr. Sukhendu Sekhar Ray. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, please. I called your name.

SHRI K.K. RAGESH (Kerala): I was standing here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other Members were standing in front of you. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, Mr. Ragesh.

SHRI K.K. RAGESH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. As already explained, Okchi cyclone has affected the life and livelihood of fishermen of these three areas. It has affected the State of Kerala in a big way. Already more than 70 fishermen died. Even though we were able to rescue 3000 fishermen, hundred fishermen are still missing. It is apprehended that the death toll may increase again. It may cross 100 mark. It has affected the State of Kerala in a very big way. Already 300 houses have been wiped out. More than 3000 houses have been damaged partially. The State Government had to open 52 relief camps where 9000 fishermen were rehabilitated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ragesh, I am afraid one minute of yours is over. I have to exhaust 17 Zero Hour submissions.

SHRI K.K. RAGESH: Please give me half-a-minute.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can't do it. Next Mr. Sukhendu Sekhar Ray. ...*(Interruptions)*... Thank you. ...*(Interruptions)*... It will not go on record. Once I say time is over, it will not go on record.