

High Level Committee chaired by Union Home Minister approves Rs 4432.10 crore of additional Central assistance to Odisha, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh

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The High Level Committee (HLC), chaired by the Union Minister for Home Affairs Shri Amit Shah, met in New Delhi on 19th August 2019 to consider additional central assistance to three states, which were affected by drought (rabi) of 2018-19, avalanches, hailstorms, landslides and cyclone 'Fani' during 2019.

The HLC approved **additional central assistance of Rs. 4432.10 crore to three States** from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) - Rs. 3338.22 crore to Odisha for Cyclone Fani, Rs 1029.39 crore to Karnataka for drought and Rs 64.49 crore to Himachal Pradesh for avalanches and hailstorm.

Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar were present in the meeting, along with senior officers of the Ministries of Home Affairs, Finance, Agriculture and NITI Aayog.

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by Centre to the States in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) already placed at the disposal of States. During 2018-19, Centre had released **Rs 9,658 crore** to all states and during 2019-20, till date Centre has released **Rs 6,104 crore** to 24 States from SDRF.

In the case of Odisha at the onset of **Cyclone 'Fani'**, Rs 340.87 crore was released in advance on 29th April 2019 from SDRF. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi visited Odisha on 06.05.2019, and as announced by him, immediate assistance of Rs. 1000 crore was released in advance. In addition, an **ex-gratiasum** of Rs. 2 lakh were provided to next of the kin of the deceased and Rs. 50,000 to seriously injured in the Cyclone from PM's Relief Fund.

During Cyclone 'Fani', Central Government had deployed 71 teams of NDRF, 19 columns of Army, 09 Engineering Task Force (ETF), 27 aircraft/helicopters and 16 Ships of Armed Forces for relief and rescue operations. During this massive evacuation drive, **more than 15.5 lakhs people were evacuated**. Central Government had provided all necessary assistance in restoration of power supply and communication in affected districts, including that of providing necessary stores, gensets, steel poles and skilled manpower etc. As other states were also likely to be affected, an amount of Rs 688 crore was released in advance from SDRF to State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

HLC also reviewed the existing practice of deputing an **Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT)** after the receipt of Memorandum from the State in the wake of any severe calamity. In a significant decision taken by the Union Home Minister, **IMCT will henceforth be constituted immediately in the aftermath of any natural calamity of severe nature**, which will visit the affected areas in the State so as to have first hand assessment of damages caused and relief work carried out by the State administration. IMCT will again visit the state after submission of the Memorandum for detailed assessment of the damages and relief operations conducted for making final recommendations for allocation of additional funds. At present IMCT visits the affected state only once after the receipt of memorandum from the state.

In line with this decision, Ministry of Home Affairs will immediately constitute and depute IMCTs to States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala affected by recent floods.

HLC also reviewed the ongoing flood situation in different parts of the country and the logistic support provided by central agencies including deployment of NDRF and Defence forces. In the combined rescue operations in the states affected by floods, landslides etc. during the current monsoon season, NDRF, Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard have evacuated and rescued more than 1,53,000 people. The flood situation in the country has been continuously monitored by Union Home Minister.

Shri Shah directed the senior officers to continue to take every possible measure to deal with the situation arising out of South-West Monsoon in the concerned states and to extend all necessary assistance to the flood affected states.
