

Defence Min allocates ₹7 cr to flood-hit Kodagu

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Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a package of ₹7 crores to rain-ravaged Kodagu district in Karnataka. The Defence Minister who visited Madikeri on Friday said she has asked the defence forces who are involved in relief work to take up restoration work immediately. This amount includes ₹1 crore from her MPs fund for the rehabilitation work in the devastated district of Kodagu.

She said, "I have come here to speak to the people affected by floods and who have lost their homes and are staying in relief camps. It is very disturbing scene that there is so much destruction. I will brief about my visit to Home Minister Rajnath Singh and will also speak to Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on the urgent need of restoring major roads," she told reporters after her visit.

Defence Minister visited various places in Kodagu including relief centers and damaged infrastructure and held an official meeting with top district officials, officials from armed forces involved in relief work and members of NDRF besides State Civil Defence Department officials.

She said the armed forces will fully involve in the restoration of some damaged roads, houses, buildings, and water and electricity connections in Kodagu. She went around some parts of ravaged Madikeri and surveyed other places which has seen a spate of landslides in the last week. Rescue and relief



Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visits the flood-affected areas to review situation in Kodagu on Friday

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operations are on-going in the region. "We are with the people of Kodagu," she added.

Kodagu-Mysuru MP Pratap Simha, In-charge Minister of Kodagu District Sa Ra Mahesh, Kodagu DC Srividya were also present at the press meet. The torrential rainfall that lashed the district last week has left a huge trail of destruction and claimed at least 17 lives. More than 5,000 people have been rendered homeless. The defence Minister was moved by a drawing on a white paper by a small boy who drawn the picture depicting the disaster.

Nirmala Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, is the second Union Minister to visit the flood-ravaged district, after DV Sadananada Gowda, who hails from the State. Her visit comes a day after State BJP Chief BS Yeddyurappa said he had apprised Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the situation in Kodagu.

Meanwhile, former Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah along with Pradesh Congress chief Dinesh Gundu Rao visited affected areas of the district and took stock of the situation on Thursday. He urged the Prime Minister to visit the rain ravaged Kodagu.

According to reports the rain fury has left so far seventeen people dead, hundreds of people lost their houses and Coffee, spices grown in thousands of hectares of land were destroyed.

The South West Monsoon that lashed from August 13 to 21 in Kodagu has surpassed 87 year old record. In 1931 Kodagu had received a record rainfall of 1559 mm in the Month of August, but this month the District has received 1,675 mm rain till August 21, according to Indian Meteorological Department sources. Besides, the District received a record 768 mm of rain in three days--August 15,16 and 17. On August 17 single day the rainfall received

in the District was 300 mm.

The administration is now focusing on providing relief and rehabilitating those at the relief camps, clearing blocked roads and restoring electricity. However, a total of 1,019 rescuers from various agencies are stationed in Kodagu and are screening villages along with NGOs and local community. "An amount of ₹30 crore has been released to Kodagu by the State Government to take up relief works," officials said, adding engineers and personnel from Madras Engineer Group are being deputed to Kodagu for road restoration and debris clearance. Schools that were shut for over 20 days reopened on Thursday, with teachers conducting classes to students at relief camps across the district.

Fifty-one relief camps have been set up in Kodagu that are currently housing 5,041 people, including 4,450 who were rescued and brought to safety till Thursday evening. According to preliminary estimates, around 2,200 houses have been damaged.

A three-member team from NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute) headed by Ragavan visited Kodagu set up a seismic monitoring centre in a school to monitor seismic activity around the area.

Another team comprising of Dr Srinivasa Reddy, Director, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre and Dr HMS Prakash (former DDG, GSI) are conducting geo-technical studies in landslide affected region of Kodagu.