

Centre comes to Kerala's aid

Rajnath announces ₹100 crore as immediate relief, terms situation serious

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Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday conducted an aerial survey of flood-ravaged Kerala and announced an immediate relief of ₹100 crore as the State braced for another spell of heavy rain after a fresh low pressure area developed in the Bay of Bengal.

State authorities said the death toll in the recent monsoon rain rose to 38 and more than 1,00,000 people had been shifted to 1,026 relief camps.

The Union Minister's announcement of aid came as the first response to the State's plea for ₹1,220 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund. The Centre had earlier sanctioned ₹80 crore and another ₹18.24 crore assistance to the State.

'Unprecedented floods'

Mr. Singh called the flood situation serious and unprecedented in the history of the State. He was accompanied by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister of State for Tourism K.J. Alphons and senior government officials.



Taking stock: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan during an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas in Kerala on Sunday. ■PTI

Later, Mr. Singh told the media that the Centre was convinced about the losses Kerala had suffered. According to him, it was the worst floods the State had experienced since 1924. The tourism and agriculture sectors had suffered badly. Large tracts of paddy and cash crops and banana plantations were damaged. The infrastructure sector, includ-

ing roads and buildings, were damaged and power lines had snapped, he said.

The rain-related calamities, he said, had rendered hundreds homeless and around 1,00,000 people had to be sheltered in relief camps.

Offering all support, Mr. Singh said the government would consider the demands for additional relief

assistance after a detailed evaluation by an inter-ministerial team. A high-level team, headed by him, would evaluate the report of the inter-ministerial team. More men from the National Disaster Response Force would be deployed in Kerala, if required, he added.

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