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CM announces new flood relief measures

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Friday announced that the government will give Rs 5 lakh to help rebuild each of the 42,000 houses that sustained damage in the recent floods.

The government has also decided to hike the crop loss compensation for farmers, Yediyurappa told the Legislative Assembly that witnessed a debate on the flood situation for a marathon nine hours.

These measures, Yediyurappa admitted, will be a fiscal stretch for the government that has resorted to reallocation and reprioritisation of expenditure.

"We have identified 11,687 houses under Category 'A' (full damage) and 31,206 houses under Category 'B' (partial damage). We have decided now that both these categories will get Rs 5 lakh," Yediyurappa said. Earlier, only those families whose houses came under Catego-

ry 'A' were to get Rs 5 lakh, whereas Category 'B' had just Rs 1 lakh. The compensation for 77,513 houses under Category 'C' (minor damage) has been hiked from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000, he added.

The August floods, which killed 91 people and displaced nearly 7 lakh persons, was the "worst ever" calamity to hit the state in the last 110 years, Yediyurappa pointed out.

The floods destroyed crops on 7.54 lakh hectares. "As per norms, we can provide Rs 6,800 per hectare of rain-fed land. The concern is that it's not adequate. So, we will add Rs 10,000 extra from our coffers and make it Rs 16,800 per hectare," he announced.

Unhappy with the government's response, the Opposition Congress staged a walkout. "Shouldn't we provide farmers with enough to recover their investment at least? You should give Rs 1 lakh per hectare," Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah demanded.