



EXPRESS DEBATE

TOPIC

Incessant rain. Rising waters. Overflowing rivers and drains. Potholed roads. Flooded streets and houses. Frequent landslips. Uprooted trees. Snapped power lines. Slow-moving traffic. These and more add to the miseries of the people. Not just this monsoon. It's the same every year. Has successive governments failed its people in tackling the vagaries of nature?

Plan while the sun shines...



DEBIN SABU, Thevalakkara

Though the government can't predict the magnitude of rain calamity, it can do something that would gain the applause of the public. It can take successful remedial measures to prevent people from suffering owing to it and provide



help after a disaster strikes its citizen. As we have seen, most of the deaths that happen during the monsoon season are mainly due to the uprooting of trees and electrocution. The

government can easily prevent this by clearing off large trees that pose danger to the public. Moreover, the government, with the help of the Meteorological Department, can oversee the ferocity of rain and can provide proper rehabilitation to the people living in vulnerable areas. The bad condition of roads is also a major cause of worry, which can lead to many accidents.

Most of the debaters have flayed the successive governments for their failure in tackling the vagaries of nature. We at 'Express' believe the government should plan in advance to meet the monsoon calamity. The Works Department should complete roadwork much before the onset of monsoon. Besides filling potholes, the pre-monsoon work should focus on cleaning culverts and drains.

BEST DEBATER



DEEPIKA BINU HARIKLAR, Oachira

During monsoon, the authorities will be busy holding marathon meetings and discussions to tackle rain-related calamities. However, once the rainy season ends, it seems the officials forget the issue. There has been a strong connection between flooding due to rain and the architecture/town planning of a region. The natural rainwater drain patterns will get disrupted owing to the incongruous construction pattern and the inconsiderate filling of wetlands that are considered the natural floodwater storage sites. The authorities give scant regard to town planning principles while granting permission to these inappropriate construction patterns as they can cause huge climatic impact. In the past, cities were developed without causing disturbance to the natural ecosystem. Road networks devoid of proper drainage system and the absence of pre-monsoon maintenance added to the misery. The only solution to this problem lies in the proper planning and reworking on the drains.

DAYANAND EDAPPALLY, Kottayam



The powers-that-be that execute our public duties have a cockeyed view of development. After several years working on our roads, we find ourselves in a terrible mess. The KSTP did its best to build better roads but a number of factors have inspired to nullify its efforts. The excessive rain this season has compounded our woes. In this analysis, it is the growing population that is to blame for our bad roads. Zooming motorists, jostling pedestrians, stray animals, failure to enforce traffic rules, the apathy of the authorities, even contributes to the nightmare. We see the potholes on our roads being repaired every year, apparently with an intention to repeat the 'farce' periodically. Successive governments, albeit at a snail's pace, have half-heartedly tried to tackle these issues, obviously without success. The visionary thinking and the ability to plan long-term for the future development of the state.

TENY B PHILIP, Pathanamthitta



All the successive governments have invariably been struggling to tackle the vagaries of nature. It's not the government alone, but the bureaucrats too are responsible for the aftermath of these calamities. Corruption at all levels plays havoc with the normal people during the time of natural perils. Moreover, pollution has an inevitable part to play in climate change which leads to natural disasters and global warming. Acid rain, for instance, is one of the frequent incidents mankind has witnessed. Every year, the government spends a huge sum of money to deal with the aftereffects of this worrying predicament. The government must find a lasting solution to end corruption and also adopt appropriate measures to tackle the aftereffects of the monsoon menace since the government is instrumental in safeguarding the people as well as their properties.



DR PARVATHY RAJ, Chalakkudy

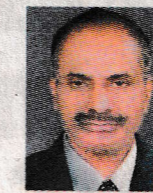
Nature was once strong and immune to the tempests of the climate happening every year. When human beings embraced modernisation, the changing guise of our home soil left it abandoned when it had to face the hideous monsoon fearlessly. Besides the immeasurable loss in terms of human lives, an estimation in terms of monetary loss will ascend inadvertently simply because the mankind was keenly involved in investing more and more on building newer arcades on our land. If we had governments functioning strictly to the laws and regulations on controlling the constructional and developmental activities of the state, we could avert many natural calamities. Proper planning and forethought on the same would have definitely saved us from this monsoon nemesis.

K NANDANAN, Thevara

Rainwater is the purest form of water supplied by nature in abundance, it is sad to see people make a land cry over incessant rain. It is unfortunate that we seldom try to understand the preciousness of water. First of all, we need to equip ourselves to meet the onslaught of the monsoon by taking necessary precautionary measures. We should construct a good water channel network to drain away water. Secondly, always construct houses on comparatively raised lands as rainwater can flow down immediately to canals. Roads and railway tracks must be constructed on raised lands. Renovation of drains and cutting down of trees that can pose threat to the public must be done in advance.



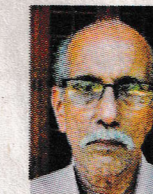
GEORGE JOHN, Mavelikkara



People long for a rich monsoon while reeling under the scorching heat in extreme summer, for it cools the earth. However, for

those who live under the scare of inundation, rainy days are a nightmare. The government, interestingly, gets alerted to this dreadful situation only at the gag end of the beginning of the ceaseless torrential rain, without mending the root cause of these indifferent, but revocable manmade disasters for good. While sanctioning construction of skyscrapers in wetlands and forests, had the authorities ensured proper execution of drainage system, this inexplicable misery could have been averted. Similarly, the potholed roads and inadequate seawall in coastal areas aggravate further the pathetic status of this state, especially at a time when the government dreams about the flourishing of monsoon tourism.

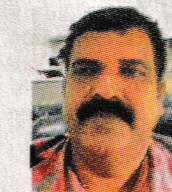
ARAVINDAKSHA MENON, Pattambi



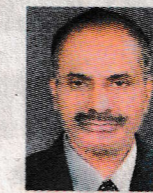
Though all natural calamities can't be predicted, we can anticipate incessant rain followed by storms uprooting trees and landslides when monsoon arrives. There are chances for the rivers to overflow and disruption of power supply. If precautionary measures are taken well in advance, some miseries can be avoided. If canals and gutters are cleaned before the advent of monsoon, roads will not be inundated and waterlogging can be reduced to some extent. Traffic snarlups and irregular running of buses and trains are common during rainy season. By rising to the occasion, we can redress the grievances of the affected lot. But there must be proper planning. The conditions of our roads are already pitiable and the incessant rain makes them worse. The government and the local self-governments can't wash their hands of the miseries people experience during the rainy season.

XAVIER BOBAN

We have been getting a ferocious punch from nature for the past few weeks by means of incessant rain, coastal erosion and landslide. All this happened because of man's greed for money and his unending thirst to encroach on forest land and seashores. A thickly populated state like Kerala can't afford to such heinous crimes, as we have already encroached beyond the border. The construction of houses on seashores, cutting down of trees for various purposes and the freezing of mandatory laws through money and muscle power, all contribute to nature's fury. The governments that come one after the other keep mum on such issues just for the sake of a few votes. We need to put an end to encroachment for our future and save ourselves from natural calamities.



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P MANGALACHANDRAN, Kannur

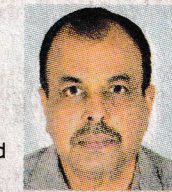
Kannur

Rain wreaks havoc in people's lives every year. But successive governments have never been seen bothered. Even if, hypothetically, the state government was forewarned of the gravity of the disaster, nothing



much would have changed on the ground, as we have seen when 'Ockhi' struck us. We have representatives who are ill-oriented

towards people's dire needs. We are yet to come across a minister who is focused on getting a perpetual problem like, say, potholes fixed in a time-bound manner. The Chief Minister and ministers spend their time mostly on files, Cabinet meetings and other formal meetings. Cabinet decisions are often mechanically passed on to the bureaucrats for implementation without proper follow-up.



The fury of nature varies - either severe drought or copious rainfall is the order of the day. Heavy downpour this season and the miseries that followed is a grim reminder of a calamity to happen. The governments that come one after the other give scant regard in enforcing rules related to the protection of the environment. Blockage of drains can be seen as the primary reason for flooding in low-lying areas and even in metros. The lack of pre-monsoon maintenance work is to blame for the situation. Planting of trees near railway lines and road margins must be regulated. The lackadaisical approach of the government is a prime reason for calamities during monsoon. Waste disposal and the indiscriminate use of plastic should be brought under the law and local bodies in association with the state government should carry out pre-monsoon drives to minimise the gravity of the miseries due to climate variations.

