

NO FINALITY IN ACCEPTING RS. 700 CRORE FROM UAE

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Accepting foreign aid to deal with the flood situation in Kerala might reverse a 15-year-old convention of the Indian government first adopted in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. The modalities of accepting foreign aid in the aftermath of the tsunami have been reopened as UAE sources indicated that the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi has reached out to India with a proposal to offer Rs. 700 crore to the flood-hit southern State.

The modalities of accepting the foreign aid was triggered after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared that the UAE had offered Rs. 700 crore to Kerala. It contrasted to the Rs. 600 crore given by the Indian government so far for relief and rehabilitation process.

“It is a welcome step and India should take it in a positive way. It reflects closer ties between two countries,” a diplomatic source said, urging India to accept the offer from the UAE.

However, former Indian envoy to the U.S. Ronen Sen said India had declined the aid offer of the U.S. after the tsunami hit the southern coasts in 2004.

However, the then MEA spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin had stated in the backdrop of similar proposals after the Uttarakhand floods that aid from abroad is not in order as India has “adequate ability” to address the necessity in such cases.

Former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said that not accepting the foreign donation is not a hard and fast rule as it was a decision by the Cabinet Committee on Security at the time where former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said India was capable of managing the domestic crisis as well as help other tsunami-hit countries.

The Ministry of External Affairs has however not responded to enunciate a clear official line for the situation in Kerala even as countries like the Maldives and Saudi Arabia have also pledged help.

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