

We are studying the event in detail to work out the steps required to avert such disasters in future.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : What about the missing persons? Is the Government taking any steps to locate them?

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : What will you ask after such detailed Statement?

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : About 111 persons were missing. Is the Government taking any steps to find out the missing person?

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Instructions have been given, what more can be done.

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : Steps are being taken.

15.14 hrs:

#### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

##### (i) **Need to implement Central Plans for desilting of Sagar Lake (M.P)**

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar) : Sir, Sagar is known for its historical lake and it was spreaded over 400 acres of land, but now due to encroachments and silting this lake is shrinking day by day. The schemes have been formulated many times by the State and Central Governments for desilting the lake but the work of desilting the lake could not be done. There is lot of filth and silt in the lake. If desilting of this lake is not done, the very existence of this lake would be in danger. The water of this lake has become so polluted that outbreak of any dangerous disease can occur any time in people and in the animals going into this lake.

Therefore, the Central Government is requested to take up the work of desilting of this historical lake on priority basis so that problem of drinking water in Sagar can be solved and Sagar may leave an impression as a tourist place.

##### (ii) **Need for early completion of Rural Electrification work in Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency Bihar**

SHRI R.L.P. VERMA (Kodarma) : Mr. Chairman Sir, In order to ensure supply of electricity to the electrified villages of Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency, the then Chairman of Rural Electrification Corporation of India during 1980-84 accorded sanction to following power stations and funds were allocated for them. These places

are in district Giridih. (1) Khadagdiha (75% work has been completed. (2) Dwar Pahari, (3) Saria (50% work is completed) (4) Gande (Plant partially completed) (5) Virani (work not started) (6) Jainagar (80% work completed) (7) Markacho (work not started) (8) Barakatha (9) Satgaon in Kodarma district. Therefore, the Government is urged upon to furnish details of the allocations made for each of the above power stations and also an enquiry should be conducted about the irregularities committed and the work pertaining to these power stations should be completed by December, 1997.

##### (iii) **Need for early Construction of the Baji Rout Setu Over River Brahmani in Dhenkanal, Orissa**

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal) : There has been an inordinate delay in the construction of the high level bridge over river Brahmani on the Nilakanthpur Bhuban Road connecting Mandar-Gondia, Deogaon, Kapilas and Dhenkanal. The project was accorded administrative approval in 1994, It is named after a great freedom fighter, 13 year old boatman Baji Rout who died in police firing at Village Nilakanthpur in 1938 and who is immortalised by the famous Oriya poet, Gnanpeeth award winner Sachi Raut Ray. The people, particularly the small and marginal farmers find great difficulties in marketing their produce due to lack of means of transport in the absence of a bridge. Six steel plants are coming in the area with the hope that the bridge would be constructed soon. Besides connecting the district headquarters Dhenkanal, it will provide a direct communication for the devotees to pay a visit to the famous holy shrine of Kapilash, the abode of Lord Chandrashekher, Therefore, the bridge will be the harbinger of progress, social empowerment and social mobility for a large segment of population living in an under-developed and backward area although having abundant natural resources. It will be a befitting memorial for freedom fighter Baji Rout if the bridge, named after him, is constructed in a year when the nation is celebrating its 50th year of independence. I request the Union Government to construct the Baji Rout Setu over river Brahmani in my constituency Dhenkanal without any further delay.

##### (iv) **Need to look into the grievancea of Handloom Weavers of Tamil Nadu, particularly of Kanyakumari District**

SHRI N. DENNIS (Nagercoil) : The handloom weavers of Tamil Nadu, particularly of Kanyakumari district are facing difficulties due to accumulation Handloom clothes in the primary societies, delay in supply of yarn and non-payment of rebates by the Government in time. The remuneration they get out of their hard labour is very low. So they are faced with the difficulty of not relying on weaving. They have become unemployed and poverty stricken and seeking employment opportunities in other field. So, I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to clear the accumulation of stocks and make quick payment of rebates and timely supply of yarn and redress their other

grievances and make them to carry on weaving as a dependable occupation for their livelihood.

**(v) Need to computerise Employment Exchanges in the Country**

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN (Karad) : Unemployment of the educated youth is the biggest challenge facing the country. While full employment is not possible without rapid industrialisation of the country, whatever few jobs that become available, the present state of Employment Exchanges, with their lack of transparency and delay causes great frustration along the youth. There is a need for urgent modernisation of these offices and opening of more offices, even in large tehsil headquarters. These offices must be completely computerised and all of them must be interconnected on the national informatics network. The staff must be increased and trained with career counselling skills.

I request the Union Government to look into the matter.

**(vi) Need to sanction adequate funds for providing financial assistance to the drought affected people in Western Orissa**

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS (Kalahandi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Kalahandi, Nuapara, Bolangir, Sonopore and Boudh districts of Western Orissa are facing continuous drought. As a result, farmers are migrating, selling their households and cattle lots for survival. Farmers have lost their capacity to go for the next kharif crop. Banks are not giving loans for seeds, fertilizers etc. The entire population of these drought-affected districts are suffering a lot without any means of survival. Government of India has seriously taken up the crop loss of Andhra Pradesh when the chronic cyclone damaged the coconut crop and adequate compensation was given to them. But the poor farmers of Orissa have not been given any assistance. Unless the farmers are given sufficient compensation for their crop loss and financial assistance for the next kharif crops, the lives of thousands of farmers and their families cannot be saved.

I request the Government to take up the matter of the hapless farmers of chronically drought affected districts of Western Orissa and direct the authorities to sanction sufficient funds for the purchase of seeds fertilizer and compensation for crop loss, etc., to the farmers.

**(vii) Need to provide necessary assistance to West Bengal Government for conducting a fresh census of the Tigers in the Sunderbans Area**

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Sunderbans in West Bengal is the abode of the legendary Royal Bengal Tiger. The West Bengal Government has expressed doubt about the latest tiger census in the Sunderbans and suggested introduction of 'more scientific methods' to derive the exact figures of the big cats in the Sunderban delta areas with the help of experts. The reconstituted Wildlife Advisory Board had observed that

even though the rate of poaching had dropped sharply in the State, vigil had to be maintained just as earlier. It had also called for conducting fresh tiger census in the Sunderbans, as also the elephant census, from this year. The Board also suggested that pragmatic steps be taken to check elephant depredations in North and South Bengal Corridors to save the paddy fields, houses and tea gardens from attacks of the pachyderms.

While fully supporting the observations of the Wildlife Advisory Board, I request the Central Government to provide some expertise and render necessary assistance, financial and technical, to the State Board to conduct a fresh census of the tigers in the Sunderbans area and check the elephant depredations.

15.24 hrs.

**FINANCE BILL, 1997**

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House shall now take up Finance Bill, 1997, Eight hours have been allotted for all the three stages of this Bill. If the House agrees, we may have five hours for general discussion, two hours for clause-by-clause consideration, and one hour for third reading. Do the Members agree with this?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Chidambaram.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): I beg to move :

"That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 1997-98, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Chairman Sir, a great deal has happened since the Budget for 1997-98 was presented in this House on February 28, 1997. The past is past. The economy beckons.

I appeal to the hon. members to look to the future with renewed vigour, confidence and hope.

The foundation of this Budget remains the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government and the broad objectives of this Budget are the same as for the United Front's first Budget presented in July, 1996. Among these are to accord priority to fiscal prudence, inflation control and macroeconomic stability, to ensure rapid growth of employment through broad-based expansion of agriculture, industry and services, to focus on the needs of the poor and ensure provision of basic minimum services under a time-bound programme, to promote higher savings and investment, especially, in infrastructure sectors, to devote special efforts towards promoting human development.

When this Budget was presented in Parliament 69 days ago, it gave a strong boost to confidence in the Indian economy both in India and abroad. In spite of a