

to provide STD facilities at Amba and Barun in Aurangabad district of Bihar immediately. Telecom Services should also be improved.

(vi) Need for early Construction of an Over-Bridge at Durgapur Railway Crossing in West Bengal

[English]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (DURGAPUR) : I would like to draw the attention of the House as well as the hon. Railway Minister towards a railway crossing at Durgapur in West Bengal on Bankura-Sagarbanga Muchipara Road.

The main road which is coming from Midnapur, Purulla and Bankura districts of West Bengal goes through the G.T. Road and connect Burdwan and Birbhum districts of West Bengal through that road but due to frequent closure of railway crossing, the people are not able to reach their destination in time resulting in inconvenience to those people as also wastage of petrol and diesel worth crores of rupees.

Therefore, I request the Central Government to construct an over-bridge on the railway crossing as early as possible.

(vii) Need to Improve the Condition of Approach Roads to Bandra Railway Terminus for the Safety of Passengers

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (MUMBAI NORTH-WEST) : Sir, the railway terminus has been established at Bandra East Mumbai for the last few years. However, the infrastructure required for free movement of the passengers to and fro the railway station have not been sufficiently provided. The approach roads to the said railway station are very narrow. A number of hawkers encroach upon these roads. The encroachment of the hutment dwellers on the railway land has caused obstacles to the traffic. The surrounding area of the railway station is unhygienic and dirty. The commuters find it difficult to reach railway station even on their feet. This has been brought to the notice of Western Railways on a number of occasions, but no corrective action has been taken so far.

I request the Union Government to look into this burning problem and clear all the approach roads, provide security and improve unhygienic conditions on war footing in the interest of railway passengers.

14.48 hrs.

FINANCE BILL, 1997 - CONTD.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Before we start discussion on the Finance Bill, I must caution the hon. Members that five hours were allotted for the general discussion. We have already taken three hours and thirty-five minutes and two-and-a-half hours are hardly left.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why do you presume that I am going to scuttle the Members' right. We will have to finish it. All the discussion should finish today itself. Therefore, I only seek cooperation of all the hon. Members. I have got a very long list of names. I will try to give the maximum time. At the same time, I seek sincere cooperation from the hon. Members. Let us take some ten minutes. The senior Members, who have already prepared, are there. They are waiting. They will get some more time. Now, I will call Shri C. Narayana Swamy. He has already taken ten minutes. And he will have to conclude with a couple of sentences.

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY (BANGALORE NORTH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, yesterday our hon. Minister of Finance had come out with certain proposals relating to withdrawal of levies proposed earlier. These included withdrawal in respect of increased tax on tread rubber and also concessions amounting to more than Rs. 100 crore. One important aspect to be noted here is the thrust given by the Government, especially the hon. Minister of Finance, for improving the basic infrastructural facility, especially the increased subsidy on the power sector of an amount of nearly Rs. 900 crore mainly for hydel power generation.

Now, most of the basic minimum services to be provided to the people, especially in the rural areas, will, under the present set-up, be implemented through the Panchayati Raj institutions. The Constitution provides for the establishment of local bodies which should function as autonomous and self-governing institutions. There is a stipulation and also a provision for devolution of powers and functions to these bodies.

Unfortunately, even after the Constitutional amendment, in many States of the country, with a few exceptions, the States have not devolved, through respective State enactments, sufficient powers and functions to these bodies. In many States requisite administrative powers are not given to these local bodies so that they could implement these very programmes. Even though they have the powers of planning, the States have not established Planning Committees at the district level which are mandatory under the Constitution.

I would like to call upon the Government to see that this anomaly is set right in consultation with the State Governments and that these representative bodies of people, the people at the grassroot level, are allowed to implement the programmes entrusted to them efficiently without giving any room for any anomaly.

Similarly, financial allocation and the provision for implementing various programmes relating to poverty alleviation and self-employment implies the cooperation of financial institutions including commercial banks, regional rural banks and the cooperative institutions involved in this field. There was a proposal for establishment of a national cooperative bank at the national level and that entailed some amendments to the relevant statute and the matter was pending before the Government. I would like to urge upon the Government, especially the hon. Finance Minister, to see that this issue is sorted out without any delay and also enable the cooperatives to function in a democratic