

to reach there. People have been agitating since 1988 for construction of an underbridge at Gaushala railway crossing but no action has yet been taken by the Government in this direction. In Tenth Lok Sabha also I raise the matter in the House.

A memorandum getting it signed by 50 thousand people of the region was submitted to the then Minister of State in Railways and he had agreed for the construction of an underbridge but no action has been taken so far. I had met the Railway Minister on 3rd December, 1996 and demanded for construction of an underbridge.

I, therefore, urge upon the railway Minister to order construction of an underbridge at Gaushala railway crossing at the earliest.

(iii) Need to expedite completion of Auranga Hydro Reservoir Project in Southern Bihar.

SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL (Chatra) : Palamu district in South Bihar is a most backward area. It has come under the grip of terrorism due to large scale poverty, unemployment and very slow pace of progress in the area. For the development of this area, Auranga Hydro Reservoir Project situated at Pali of Palamu district was approved in June, 1993. Many blocks of Palamu district are covered by this scheme. By March 1996 the estimated expenditure on this scheme was Rs. 10.40 crore.

It is a matter of regret that in March 1996 work on this scheme was stopped suddenly. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Water Resources through this House that keeping in view the wider interest of people Auranga Reservoir Scheme may be completed immediately. On completion of this project nearly 85 thousand acres of land will be irrigated and 20 Mega Watt electricity will be generated. On completion of this project lakhs of people in Palamu, Chatra, Gaya and Aurangabad district would be benefited and the problem to terrorism could be solved.

(iv) Need for Construction of a Footpath on the Railway Bridge on the River Dilli between Borhat and Namrup in Sibsagar District, Assam

[English]

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (Jorhat) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this is a plea for providing footpaths to the Railway bridges on rivers which are at present being widened as a part of gauge conversion work. Loss of lives has been reported over the years while pedestrians try to walk across the river since there are no other bridges in the neighbourhood. Whenever such a footpath is demanded, the Railway authorities ask the State Government to bear the expenses. It is indeed strange to see that when the Railway authorities spend crores of rupees on gauge conversion just for the

construction of a footpath, they demand financial assistance from the State Government. The footpath forms part of the Railway bridge which forms part of the gauge conversion. The cost of providing a footpath while widening the bridge is very low. If it is, however, constructed when the widening work of the bridge has already been completed, the cost would treble up.

I urge upon the Government that footpaths should be constructed at the time of widening the bridge during the gauge conversion work wherever the need is genuine. In this connection, I emphasise particularly the construction of a footpath on the Railway bridge on the river Dilli between Borhat and Namrup in Sibsagar district of my Lok Sabha constituency, Jorhat, located in Assam.

(v) Need for construction of an overbridge near Shankarpur Gomti on Dawood Nagar Aurangabad National Highway.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before giving notice under rule 377, I would like to make a request. I feel that should I read this notice or not because in the last session also nothing happened by reading this notice and no reply was given to me.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Nothing is spoken except what is written under rule 377.

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Gaya-Mughal Sarai (Eastern Railways) line passes through Patna - Dawood Nagar - Aurangabad National Highway. There is Shankarpur railway level crossing between Dawood Nagar and Aurangabad. Due to heavy traffic on Grand Cord Line, Shankarpur railway crossing remains closed most of the time. Due to closure of railway level crossing on this busy road, passengers have to face a lot of inconvenience. It also results in wastage of time.

Therefore, the Central Government is requested to arrange for construction of an overbridge at Shankarpur railway level crossing on Dawood Nagar Aurangabad National Highway.

(vi) Need to provide financial assistance to Government of Bihar for completion of Punpun-Dargha-Morhar Irrigation Project.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, India is a federal country and Bihar State is a part of it. Bihar State was on the third position on the Indian Map. Today it has reached the 23rd position as a result of which unemployment is increasing rapidly in Jahanabad district of Bihar. As a result of this fact extremism is on the increase there. Dalit and poor youth are joining these extremists

organisations. The pace of progress has slowed down. There are no funds for the development. Government has not provided money for the main scheme of the Government for the last ten years. Our area is also backward in the field of education due to poverty. There are many rivers in our area.

Punpun-Dargha-Morhar Irrigation Project was sanctioned four years ago but it is still lying with the Irrigation Ministry of the Government of Bihar. In the absence of required funds the work on this project has not yet started. The delay will result in increase in the estimated cost. Therefore, Central Government is requested to provide funds for Punpun-Dargha-Marhar Irrigation Project and get the work started there.

(vii) Need to look into the problems of farmers whose cultivable land falls beyond barbed wire fencing on Indo-Pak border in Punjab.

SHRI MAJOR SINGH UBOKE (Tarantaran) : There are serious problems of the farmers of three border districts of Punjab i.e. Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ferozpur whose lands fall beyond the barbed wire fencing and in between the actual Indo-Pak border. For these farmers, their farms have become virtually inaccessible because of the lack of sympathy of the BSF personnel manning the fence. They are not allowed to work there from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. They suffer great crop losses. They are not allowed to sow tall crops like sugarcane, cotton and jawar bajra which are most suitable for the soil. People cannot water their fields at night because of night Curfew on the border. During the day, labour and harvesting machinery are not allowed. Wild animals destroy their crops at night as there is none to protect. They suffer indignities. All over the world, Governments give facilities and incentives to the border people to keep up their morale. Land for border fencing was taken in haste and very little compensation was provided which even up to now has not been fully paid. Gates provided at entry points are at far off distances which must be brought closer. The Government should acquire the land beyond the barbed wire fencing for their own use and adequate compensation given to the farmers.

(viii) Need to include Construction of a Road Bridge at Choukighat on National Highway No. 52 in Sonitpur District, Assam in Plan outlay

[English]

SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA (Tezpur) : A road bridge at Chowkighat over river Jia Bharali in Sonitpur districts has been a long standing and overwhelming demand of the entire population of the North Bank of Assam. The only existing bridge across this giant tributary of the Brahmaputra in the upper reaches of the river bypasses the populated areas. The new bridge at Chowkighat will reduce by 38 KM to 35 KM. the distance along NH No. 52 between Tezpur and

all important places on the North Bank including Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh. What is more, the bridge will save a large number of villages inhabited by lakhs of people presently under serious and imminent threat of erosion by the turbulent waters of Jia Bharalie. The bridge would also enhance the military capability of the Indian Army by facilitating faster movement to the strategic frontiers with China from the bases in and around Tezpur.

Survey, investigation, detailed project report and preparation of tender documents have already been completed for the proposed bridge at a cost of about Rs. 51 lakhs. Delay in commencement of construction could render this expeditious infrastructure, as the configuration could change due to erosion presently going on unabated.

I would urge upon the Ministry of Surface Transport to accord highest priority to the proposed bridge at Chowkighat on NH No. 52 and include it in the Plan and budget for implementation commencing from the financial year 1997-98, if not from the current year.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur) : This problem is also there in our area at borders. Farmers are facing problem.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You give notice under 377.

14.35 hrs.

**MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY
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[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, no Minister connected with the department is present here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : His colleague is sitting here. He is just coming.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, no Minister connected with education department is present here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I have called him.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : First, let the Minister come. There should be someone to take notes.

[English]

SHRI A.C. JOS (Idukki) : No Cabinet Minister is here, Sir... (Interruptions) You should give strict instructions in this regard... (Interruptions). The House should not be taken so lightly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The concerned Minister has come.