

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is indeed a serious matter and the Prime Minister has already given reply to it. I admit that it is indeed a serious matter.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA: The foreigners have also played a role in this regard. The tragedy happened in Gujarat has been unfortunate. The State Government has killed the innocent people by supporting them.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

14.55 hrs.

- (i) **Need to retain 'rake point' facility at Ratlam Railway Station in Madhya Pradesh**

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (MANDSAUR): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Sir, Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh has special importance from the commercial point of view. It is a commercial centre as it is an important station of Western Railways and is situated between Mumbai and Delhi. Therefore, it has its own importance from the point of view of railways also.

I have come to know that Railway Administration has withdrawn the 'Rake Point' facility at Ratlam Railway Station, though a declaration may not have been made or an advertisement may not have been published, and as a result thereof, lot of inconvenience has been caused not only to the traders but also to the farmers because fertilizers used to be distributed by co-operative department and farmers were getting fertilizers from time to time through it. It would result in heavy loss to farmers as there would be delay in getting fertilizers. Along with the loss of revenue to Railways, it would also adversely affect the agricultural production.

The sugar mills of this district also avail the rake loading facility and Soya industry also did not face difficulty in sending D.O.C. Wheat, Gram, Black gram, (Urad) etc. alongwith fertilizers, one such items, the rake-load of the half rake load of which have been used by Food Corporation of India, Supply Corporation and the co-operative department fully. People have sufficient facilities inspite of the lack of arrangement for crane siding at Ratlam.

Ratlam is a station which has adequate rake capacity and there has not been unnecessary delay in unloading the rakes. Many cement factories in Mandsoor near Ratlam also make use of this facility from time to time. Due to withdrawal of the aforesaid facility, inconvenience will be caused to thousands of people on the one hand and it may also render the labourers jobless on the other hand leading to resentment.

Therefore, the Minister of Railways is requested to retain the 'rake point' facility at Ratlam.

- (ii) **Need to look into irregularities in Telecommunication Department in Agra and adjoining districts in Uttar Pradesh.**

PROF. OM PAL SINGH 'NIDAR' (JALESAR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir telecommunication services, especially in Agra, Mathura, Ferozabad, Etah, Mahamayanagar and Farukhabad districts are in a mess, Telephones remain out of order for months together. Nobody turns up for putting the telephone in order after making repeated complaints. No rules are followed in releasing telephone connections. The situation in rural areas is even worse. Poor farmers are being openly exploited. Non-functioning of telephone exchanges has become a common feature.

Therefore, the Union Government is requested to bring about improvement in the functioning of telecommunication services and punish the guilty officials after getting an enquiry conducted by a Committee of Members of Parliament in the said districts.

- (iii) **Need for early start of work on Navinagar Power Project in Bihar during current financial year**

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, global tenders were invited by the Power Grid Corporation of India on 30.8.96 for the 2000 MW Navinagar coal based thermal power project being executed with the assistance from the Ministry of Power. In response to the global tenders invitation eight parties sent documents regarding competitive bids. Tenders of the developers regarding prequalifications were to be opened on 28th November, 1996, but due to non-compliance on the part of the department to furnish clarifications sought by the developers regarding practicability of the concerned coal mines, no bid was given.

It seems to me that unnecessary delay is being caused to execute this project which may help in overcoming the power crisis in Bihar. Coal mines are available in Bihar, and inspite of it, unnecessary delay is being caused in engaging a good colliery for Navinagar thermal power project.

Therefore, I humbly request the Union Government that the work on Navinagar thermal power project should be started early and the implementation of the project should commence during the current financial year in order to solve the serious power crisis in Bihar.

[English]

- (iv) **Need to create a New West Coast Railway Zone in Kerala**

SHRI A. SAMPATH (CHIRAYINKIL): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there has been a long pressing demand for the creation of a new West Coast Railway Zone with its headquarters either at Kozhikkode or at Cochin. Even though the revenue received from passenger traffic as well as goods traffic in Kerala show an impressive upward trend, the facilities for the passengers are poor. The number of trains and bogies provided thereby are insufficient. The