

[Shri Ram Naik]

a famous writer in all fields of literature like story, novel etc. Shri Khandekar was the first recipient of Gnanpith Award in Marathi language. His literature was translated in Tamil, Kannad, Telegu, Hindi, Gujarati, English and many other languages. I personally, met and requested the hon. Minister on 16 October, 1996 that a postal stamp should be released in his memory. The hon'ble Minister had given reply to me on 18 November that we are considering the matter. Later on, I sent one more reminder but unfortunately the Government has not taken any decision for releasing a postal stamp on this great litterateur till date. I would like to request that the postal stamp in memory of such a great litterateur should immediately be released. I would ask the Hon. Minister to give statement as to when the stamp would be release. Some time, we feel that whenever the question of Marathi speaking people is raised, centre shows apathy towards it.

A Birth Centenary of Shri C.D. Deshmukh passed last year but to commemorate him no postal stamp was released. There should be no such discrimination. By doing so we have shown disrespect towards Shri C.D. Deshmukh. At least it should not be done in the case of Shri Khandekar. It is my submission. I urge the hon. Minister to take an early decision in this regard.

[English]

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with the demand made by Shri Ram Naik on the issue of release of a postal stamp for Shri Khandekar.

Now, I want to raise another important issue regarding the huge default in respect of inland air travel tax owed by private airlines. As you know, all airlines, including private air operators, collect inland air travel tax at the rate of 15 per cent from all domestic passengers. This tax is required to be deposited with the Customs authorities within 30 days. However, the private air operators have not deposited this inland travel tax amounting to over Rs. 45 crore even after repeated reminders. Half of these dues are owed by the air operators who are still active and the other half is owed by the airlines which are no longer active. They have, probably, wound up. One airline owes as much as Rs. 13 crore. One Chennai based group which operates two airlines owes Rs. 15 crore and even Vayudoot, a wholly Government owned airlines, owes Rs. three crore.

Sir, why is the Government silent on this issue ? Why

are the Customs authorities so lenient with these air operators ? Why are these private air operators allowed to illegally use huge amount of public taxes ? It is reported that the Customs authorities have now issued an ultimatum forcing the airlines to pay by this evening all the taxes worth Rs. 45 crore which are required to be deposited.

I would ask the Government to please assure the House that no further extension will be granted and also that the interest will be collected on the delayed payment. I also want to know what action is going to be taken against those airlines which have stopped operating. Whether their properties will be attached or their aircraft would be impounded I want a statement in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention towards increasing infiltration from Pakistan border near Gujarat. Pakistan has increased its industrial activities in Badin and Tharpakar areas and is going to invest rupees 800 crores. there. Pakistan has concentrated its troops at the border also so that it can start its industrial activities. Eight power stations having a capacity of 5200 M.W. are being installed there. There might be a vast reserves of natural gas and oil and 224 billion tonne coal is also estimated there. According to the news published yesterday 17 persons of Bangladesh were also arrested there. Sircreek is also on the border of this area which is encroached by Pakistan and issued notification showing the area as its territory I have drawn the attention of the House several times that this area is a vast reserves of oil where no good and latest technology is available. People of Pakistan Intelligence service ISI impersonating as fishermen come in speed boats. If no attention is paid to this area, they will infiltrate Kutch also as is done in Kashmir. Besides Gujarat, Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer areas of Rajasthan and District Palanpur of Gujarat are also adjoining this border. Position of barbed wires and light arrangements have helped to reduce the infiltration there. Therefore, it is my submission that the remaining area should also be covered with barbed wire. I request the Government to pay attention towards this.

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHLE (Bilaspur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, even after 50 years of Independence, the Government is not able to solve the problem of potable water in state, hence the common man has to go 2-4 kms. to fetch the water. In some villages due to non availability of handpumps and wells the villagers are facing problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mohle, Please do not read this.