

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is a matter pertaining to the State Assembly. How are you raising Assembly matter here?

.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not raise Assembly matter here. Do not set a bad precedent. Not allowed.

..... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Speaker ..... (Interruptions)\*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, you can not raise Assembly matters here.

12.34 hrs.

(At this Stage Dr. Girija Vyas walked out the House)

[Translation]

SHRI SOHAN VEER SINGH (Muzaffarnagar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir Ganga has a special significance in this country but the Ganga canal has its special value in the doab of Ganga and Yamuna. It is serving the farmers for hundreds of years. It has a vast fertile land suitable for growing sugar first time the flow of this canal is being blocked from 15 April to 15 May. As a result of which the soil of Ganga would be denuded to a great extent and due to the non-availability of water there would be a great difficulty to the people. I would like to state that the flow of this canal should not be blocked in any case from 15 April to 15 May. It has never been done so far it is blocked only during the rainy season. Its flow should not be blocked from 15 April to 15 May.

I would like to submit through you that orders should be issued to the Uttar Pradesh Government that the flow of this canal should not be blocked at this time so that farmers can may continue to irrigate their fields. ....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I will give you a chance.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV (Purnea) : Mr. Speaker Sir I would like to draw your attention towards the riots which took place in Bhagalpur of Bihar as a very large scale in the country. At that time Bihar Government has provided grant to the victims of these riots. In these riots both the communities Hindu and Muslims suffered. But now Bihar Government is taking back that amount with interest.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a state subject. How can you mention it here.

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : Case is being registered against those persons who are not refunding this amount. This is the condition of the State, you can find out. .... (Interruptions) so far as the matter of life and property is concerned, there is no safety for it. About five thousand 'Madarsa' teachers in Bihar are on hunger strike but no body is there to listen to their grievances. I have come prepared with points if you allow me I can submit. Bihar Government has announced that pay and other facilities would be provided to the teachers of Urdu Colleges and 'Madarsas' at par with the teachers of Hindi Colleges and schools but no action has been taken so far in this regard. Five thousand people are suffering. 51 Muslims have been put behind the bar by the State Government on the charges of having involvement in the riots but there is none to redress their grievances, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek your protection otherwise situation can aggravate in the State. I want protection from the Government. This Government claims to follow the path of social justice but they are putting Bhagalpur riot victims in the jails. Is this social justice and is this Government advocating the course of social justice?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I will bring it to the notice of the Government.

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : Please give me protection.

MR. SPEAKER : It is enough. Please, do not insist on it now. I have given you a chance.

.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will bring it to the notice of the Government.

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : Thank you, Sir.

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to draw the attention of the House and of the whole country towards a problem which in my opinion is quite serious. On the 12th of March, the 'Business Standard' published a news saying that a notice has been given to the Government of India, that an international organisation, which is not a Government organisation and which gives opinion about the credit worthiness of any country, has put about 46 questions to the Government of India. All these questions relate to major economic policies about disinvestment, privatisation, insurance or subsidy. Everything that we can imagine, has been raised in it.

The news reads like, "Tough Moody's Posers to decide India's Ratings". Earlier it was the World Bank and IMF and

now Moody's is giving a notice. It is not a big news item. If you want, I can read it out. It is in such a language that any Indian would feel ashamed of it. I do not know what is the reaction of the Government. According to my information, the Government is trying to give answers to all these questions. They are making preparations for that. It will not be known to this House. It will not be known to the people of this country. This policy matters will be divulged to an organisation called Moody's in order to get the credit worthiness certificate for this country. It is a private organisation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall just read it out :

"International rating agency Moody's Investor Services has posed several tough queries before the Government on issues ranging from integration of the oil pool deficit into the Centre's finances, inflexibility of public sector spending and the Government's failure to adhere to public sector disinvestment schedules.

The Government's response to these queries will determine Moody's decision to retain India under credit watch. The agency put the country on credit watch with negative implications just a week after the Budget. The report was prepared prior to the Budget presentation. The agency's sovereign risk unit has listed 46 issues to the Finance Ministry for discussion during its visit in the third week of March.

Moody's also expects a time-table for capital account convertibility, opening up of the insurance, pension and provident fund sector. It also wants a preview in the long-term strategy for deregulating administered prices and reducing subsidies.

The queries are divided into seven heads: fiscal policy, deregulation, industrial policy, domestic debt management, external accounts, policy, and prices on monetary and exchange rate besides external commercial borrowings.

The Government has also been asked to identify the factors that contribute to the inflexibility in public sector spending and the political and economic constraints in cutting fiscal imbalances.

Moody's has queried if the political environment has changed to push through reforms in this sector.

On the Oil Pool Account, Moody's has asked how it will be integrated into the Central Government finances. This is significant as the Oil Pool Deficit does not form part of the fiscal deficit. On the disinvestment front, Moody's has asked why the schedules are not adhered to.

Moody's has asked the Centre what instruments it possesses to control State and local spending. It also wants to know now the Centre deals with the non-payments and roll-overs of States.

On infrastructure, Moody's has asked about a long-term policy to encourage private investment and the view on Government guarantees for projects.

Moody's has come down very hard on the Government over domestic debt management. Is the burden of a large public sector debt perceived by the present Government?' it said and also asked for the measures to stabilise this debt. The Government has been told to list the fiscal tools intended to be used in the domestic demand management in 1997-98.

On external accounts, Moody's has asked how much additional tariff liberalisation can be tolerated in advance of revenue reforms. This is an important query as the reduction in tariffs will result in a fall in Government revenue which has to be offset by revenue reforms".

This is the news item, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Prime Minister is present here and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is also not present ..... (Interruptions)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we all are sitting here, We will pass on whatever is being said by the hon. Member.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Even if they are present I do not expect much from them. I am very frank. They are under such a great pressure, It is not the only news item. On the same page there is another news from International Monetary Fund. Where are we heading to, Mr. Speaker? I am not criticising anybody. I do not want that anybody should answer this question because the Finance Minister will come here and make a statement in flowery language and everybody will feel satisfied. We have never had such a brilliant Finance Minister!

I expect a reaction from Shri Somnath Chatterji, I expect it from friends who have adhered to certain policies. It is not the question, Mr. Speaker, only of economic policy. It is not the question, of dignity, honour, sovereignty of this nation. and this is at stake, Mr. Speaker. I shall like to know from the Government whether they are going to respond to this in the third week of March without bringing all these matters before this House? Because these are vital policy issues, Mr. Speaker, I sent this notice to you yesterday because I never rise up in the Zero Hour.

But, I think, this is such a vital matter that we just cannot ignore it. I shall like you, Mr. Speaker, to use your good offices to see this so that this Government sees some point in defending the honour and dignity of this nation. .... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I want to make one observation. I would like to know whether the Government of India has asked for this rating. If not, I do not know on what basis the questionnaire has been put. It should be clarified by the Government.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : That is what I said.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Certainly, there is no question of compromising our dignity. We shall never allow that to happen.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : The Government should tell that. The Government should explain their position. *(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : The Government should reply. No compromise will be made with the sovereignty of the country.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue raised is very important and it is related with the self esteem of the country. Any private agency may undertake rating on its own we do not bother about it. They are free to do that. But the way of questioning and the stance shown by them indicate as if our future depends on their questioning and rating. They have tried to create such an impression. The Government should tell Moody company that we will not give any reply to your queries. Ours is an independent and open country. You may draw any conclusion that you like but we do not like such questioning. This should be clearly told.

*[English]*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum) : Sir, just one point. I do not think that is enough.

MR. SPEAKER : I think that is enough. I shall have to ask the Leader of the Opposition that something should be done.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : We would like to know from the Government whether they approached Moody on their own.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, the same question has been asked by Shri Somnath Chatterjee.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : No. It is because that itself will indicate to what level of subservience we had been dragged into in the last few years. Therefore, that question should be answered first by the Government. And secondly, they have to confirm whether or not such a questionnaire has been sent to them. It is because, all these are Press reports.

MR. SPEAKER : I think it has already been said. Shri Somnath Chatterjee has already said this. Now, Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, from our side, we share the concern expressed by the hon. ex-Prime Minister along with other leaders of this House. The country's prestige, sovereignty and dignity should not be compromised with any one, private company or any other country. This is our policy. Having heard what has been said here, I think, the Government will be kind enough - if any such thing is there - to come and apprise the House and with the consent of the House, that should be done. Nothing else will satisfy us.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara) : Sir, at least, the Government should clarify whether such questions have been asked ..... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Your Leader has said so Why are you repeating it?

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : That is not being responded.

12.48 hrs.

*[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]*

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Dr. Bhoi.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Sir, before you go to the other issue, I would like to say just one sentence.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We have already gone to the other issue. That issue has already been closed.

..... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : That is why the issues are getting mixed up.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Dr. Bhoi, you may speak after him.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : I would like to say only one sentence. It has been stated that the Government of India should inform that private concern that they are not going to reply to their questionnaire. I think instead of replying to them, the Government must simply ignore that questionnaire altogether and consign it to their files. There should be no reply. The questionnaire that had been put by that concern to our Government asking so many questions must be totally ignored and not replied in the interest of the honour and dignity of the nation. .... *(Interruptions)*

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, I fully endorse Shri Banatwalla's view. We should just ignore it ..... *(Interruptions)*

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI (Sambalpur) : Sir, the 'Rhur' of our country is the danger. That means the most important mineral belt which is there in Orissa where mining activities for iron ore, manganese and bauxite in Barbil and Barjamda sectors of Keonjhar and surrounding districts are carried on, is in danger. The activities have come to a standstill after the Supreme Court Order. The mines have been close down