

lower denomination, for want of currency notes of the denomination of Re. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5, the Bhutanese currency of lower denomination is in circulation in the Northern region. So, it is a dangerous thing, and I request the Government to look into this matter so that the currency notes of lower denominations are made available.

SHRI A. SAMPATH (Chirayinkil): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government regarding the deadlock in the investigation carried out by the Central Bureau of Investigation on the death of Sister Abhaya, which happened four-and-a-half years ago in the district of Kottayam, Kerala. Sister Abhaya was an inmate of the Pious Tenth Convent, Kottayam. Her dead body was seen in a well of that Convent on 27th March, 1992, and the investigation was taken up by the CBI some three-and-a-half years back. The Special Investigation team under the Joint Director of the CBI came to Kottayam and after the conduction of a dummy experiment revealed that this was a clear case of murder. But so far, unfortunately, nobody has been arrested.

Another thing that I would like to point out is that a team of CBI men were posted at Kottayam. They were having their office at the PWD Travellers' Bungalow and they were conducting the investigation from there. But unfortunately, they have closed down that office at Kottayam. On 14th March, 1996 the CBI team came back to Delhi and now the investigation has come to a deadlock.

I would like to urge upon the Government to give necessary instructions to the Central Bureau of Investigation so that this investigation could be carried out and the CBI should expedite the investigation and arrest the culprits immediately. That is all, Sir.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your kind attention and through you I would like to urge upon the Parliamentary Affairs Minister about a very important matter. Yesterday while replying to the debate on Rural Development, the hon. Minister has admitted in the House that he himself during his tours to several States had witnessed the non-utilisation and mis-utilisation of rural funds which are usually granted by Parliament for various schemes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Indira Awas Yojna and many other programmes.

Article 148 of the Constitution of India gives ample power to the Comptroller & Auditor General to audit the entire matter both in the purview of the States and Union. Article 243 after the 74th Amendment of the Constitution gives the power to Governor to raise the taxes and revenues of the panchayats. I would only like to submit through you that there are serious misappropriations going on in the name of the poor people's money and funds. No forest is there, but the money has been shown.

In this country, we are entrusting every scam to CBI. I would like to know from the Government and from the concerned Legal Department whether a regular Cell could be appointed to go into the matter as to why thousands and thousands of crores of rupees of development funds for rural poor people are being misappropriated in the name of implementation of the schemes which are nothing and not being accounted for in the books. There are several audit reports.

This matter is very important and the CBI must look into this irrespective of political party and power of the States. This is my submission because thousands and thousands of crores of rupees are involved and this Parliament has voted this account.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I want to say one thing today. From now on, each hon. Member will get only one chance to raise a matter during zero hour in a week. Otherwise, it is impossible to distribute time to everybody. One chance one week for each hon. Member would be given. Therefore, those hon. Members who have got a chance today will not get it tomorrow.

13.22 hours

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) **Need to protect the interests of sugarcane growers in UP by removing the role of sugarcane cooperatives**

[Translation]

SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH (Meerut): Mr. Speaker, Sir, due to surplus production of sugarcane in 1995-96 in UP, the sugarcane growers have suffered huge financial loss. The middlemen purchased sugarcane at the rate of Rs. 30/- per quintal from the farmers and sold it at the rate of Rs. 70/- to the mills. Purchasing slips were not issued to those farmers who had sugarcane. The inquiries conducted so far in this regard have confirmed that corruption and irregularities have taken place. So I request the Government that the inquiries pending may be completed and the sugarcane cooperatives should have no role as between the sugar mills and the farmers.

13.24 hours

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

- (ii) **Need to provide special grant to state Government of Madhya Pradesh to overcome acute drinking water problem in Sagar**

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar): Sir, Sagar city has been facing acute problem of drinking water during summer season for the last several years. The work on Rajghat Project launched to overcome the problem has

come to a standstill due to shortage of funds. With the beginning of the month of February, the frequency of water supply in the pipes goes down to once in two or three days. In many wards of the city, the water pipes are completely dry. The city continues to suffer this trauma until July. The execution of Rajghat Project stands postponed. According to newspaper reports, the Project Division set up for Rajghat Dam Project is proposed to be shifted to Guna. If this project is shifted outside Sagar, it will adversely affect the ongoing drinking water project for Sagar city and further aggravate the problems of the people. I, therefore, earnestly request the Central Government to take over this project to provide adequate funds to the State Government under a special scheme so that the people of Sagar may get relief from the problem of drinking water.

(iii) Need to Dispense with 'Users Charge' being Levied on Passengers Going Abroad from Calicut Airport

[English]

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN (Cannanore): Sir, it is highly essential that the users charge being levied upon passengers going abroad from Calicut Airport be discontinued without further delay in order to ensure justice and equal treatment to such passengers.

The users' charge of Rs. 500/- per head on both tickets of adults and children is being levied on all passengers going abroad from Calicut Airport since October, 1995. At that time, objections to such a discriminatory charge was overcome with an assurance that the charge would be levied only over a period of six months. However, in spite of this assurance, the charge is still being levied and is a big burden upon all passengers going abroad and especially those travelling with family.

This charge is in addition to the Rs. 300/- per head by way of foreign travel tax.

Many passengers even from the Northern Districts of Kerala are, therefore, forced to take flights from Trivandrum where no such charge is being levied. The passengers are deeply agitated over this indiscriminate charge and I seek the intervention of the hon. Minister for Civil Aviation to ensure early discontinuation of such a levy. Thank you.

(iv) Need for Construction of Sluice Gates to Check Fresh Floods in Katihar District, Bihar

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (Katihar): Sir, under the Master Plan, Water Resources Department in 1974 had constructed the Mahananda embankment to stop the floods originating from the rivers like Ganga, Mahananda and Koshi entering the Katihar district. But the embankment proved to be a curse rather than a boon as it created more serious problems for the farmers of the

district. The land on which the embankment was constructed accumulated fresh floods. With the result, thousands of acres of land could not be cultivated and the farmers had to flee to other districts for work.

To clear the fresh flood waters, it was decided to construct Sluice Gates in Manihari, Amdabad, Azamnagar, Pranpur etc but the State Government has not been able to construct the Gates. I, therefore, urge upon the Central Government to take up the urgent steps for the construction of Sluice Gates at the required places in Katihar district.

(v) Need to improve the Functioning of Telephones in Rural Areas of Tiruppattur Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu

[Translation]

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (Tiruppattur): In the past few years, through certain Technology Missions, an impetus was intended to be given to provide telecommunication facilities etc in rural areas. But the availability of modern communication facilities is still eluding the rural areas. The avowed policy of the Ministry of Communications is to link all the villages of the country by way of providing them with telephone connections. At this juncture, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the sorry plight of certain rural telephone exchanges in my constituency. Improvisation and modernisation of already existing rural telephone exchanges should be given priority. The rural telephone exchanges in Northamboondi, Vettavalam, Thandarampattu, Vanapuram, Mallavadi and Verayur are at a distance of 15 to 20 Kms. around Thiruvannamalai. Most of these exchanges often meet with service shut-downs due to poor maintenance and obsolete equipment. Many surrounding villages get connected to these exchanges and the telephone link is often found disrupted. Apart from that, a good number of villagers of this area are waiting for long to get telephone connections. The same is the case with rural areas around Tiruppattur town. This industrially backward, agricultural area has sparsely located units of leather industry. So, this area must have improvised communication network to grow and prosper along with other parts of the country. I request the Central Government to take up modernisation work at the earliest in the rural telephone exchanges in Tiruppattur constituency.

(vi) Need to Take Effective measures to Check Sea Erosion in Sunderbans, West Bengal

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): Sunderbans area, though rich in flora and fauna and renowned for its Tiger Project, its people are extremely poverty ridden; there being no industry or even any agricultural activity—as it is very marshy and is a constant

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.