

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.

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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.