

Similar biosphere centres should be set up at the location of each and every national park. At the same time, I demand that the Mahanadi Gorge Sanctuary in Orissa should be converted into a National Park by including Padmatola and Tikrapara.

- (iv) **Need to take up the matter re: Construction of dams on rivers flowing down to Bihar from Nepal with the Nepalese Government**

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI (Sitamarhi) : 'All the main subsidiary rivers flowing in Bihar to the north of the river Ganga originate in Nepal. Out of these rivers Gandak Bagmati, Kamla, Koshi and Adhwara Group of rivers pass through the plains of north Bihar due to which north Bihar is prone to severe floods every year causing huge loss of men and material. Non of the rivers on the Nepal border has high embankments due to which floods become all the more damaging. There is great need constructing high embankments in the plains of North Bihar in order to control floods. An Indo-Nepalese sub-commission had been set up on water resources. This Commission has shown no enthusiasm so far for the development of water resources.

The Central Government is, therefore, urged upon to solve the problem by holding early talks with the Nepalese Government for flood control and construction of high embankments in north Bihar.

- (v) **Re: Need to lay a New Railway Line between Ariyalur and Salem in Tamil Nadu**

[English]

SHRI A. RAJA (Perambalur) : Sir, Perambalur is the Headquarter of my constituency as well as for Perambalur Thiruvallavar district, which is newly constituted last year. The only district headquarter in Tamil Nadu which has not been touched by the railway line is Perambalur. Moreover, throughout my vast constituency, the railway track just crosses only at Ariyalur town which is 30 kms. away from Perambalur. Even at Ariyalur station express trains namely 'Pallavan', 'Pandian', 'Madure Mahal' and 'Vaigai' have no stoppage at all and as such there is not use for my constituency people by these trains.

Similarly another Taluk Headquarter as well as a Municipal Town, Turaiy of my constituency and another neighbouring Municipal Town Namakal which is having the large lorry operation in Tamil Nadu are also not yet connected by the Railway line. It is a long need and demand of my constituency for more than 50 years to connect these towns by a railway track without appreciation and action. I request the hon. Minister for Railways to take steps to lay a new railway line from Ariyalur to Salem connecting the towns Ariyalur, Perambalur, Turaiyar and Namakal urgently. And for the time being the express trains mentioned earlier may be

stopped at least for one minute at Ariyalur-Station which is giving more revenue than the other stations through both, passengers and goods.

- (vi) **Re: Need to include Sakri reservoir project of Bihar in the Ninth Five Year Plan and release adequate funds for its completion**

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : From the upper Sakri reservoir project of Bihar, a total of 83,325 hectares of lands of Jumai, Shekhpura, Nalanda, Nawada, Hazaribagh and Giridih districts is proposed to be irrigated. This scheme has been approved by the T.A.C. of Central Water Commission. A sanction of Rs. 18.373 lakh has been received, in the light of the price index for the year 87-88. Due to non-availability of funds the work on the project has not been started. This scheme is in public interest.

The Government is, therefore, urged upon to include the upper Sakri reservoir project in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

- (vii) **Need to open more post offices in offices in Erandol Parliamentary Constituency Maharashtra**

[Translation]

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Sir, in my Parliamentary Constituency Erandol (Maharashtra), Specially in its Adivasi, backwards and rural area, post offices are situated at distances of about 4-5 kms. and at several places at distances of 15-20 Kms, due to which the inhabitants of this region have to face great difficulty and do without the postal facilities. These areas also face lack of Dak delivery. People receive their letters after several months due to which many youths are deprived of employment opportunities.

Therefore, through you I would urge upon the hon. Minister to issue orders for setting up more and more post offices in the rural, adivasi and backward areas in the Erandol Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra so that people may get the benefit of postal facilities.

- (viii) **Need to provide economic package to Himachal Pradesh on the lines of one provided to North-Eastern States**

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Sir, Prime Minister Shri H.D. Deve Gowda toured the eastern States last month during which he announced package programmes everywhere for the schemes of the States and removing backwardness of those States, promising several crores of rupees for solving the problems of the States of that region for which his Government was praised of the hill regions of that area. But Himachal Pradesh was kept out of these announcements because this State is

peaceful and far away from extremism. But now the young men and women and these regions also have become prone to extremist thinking, feeling that the Government comes to the help of extremists prone areas only and not peaceful States.

I therefore urge upon the Central Government that Himachal Pradesh which has Punjab on one side and Jammu & Kashmir on the other, should be provided with the same kind of package as given to the eastern States, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

14.25 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

(i) Rise in Prices of Essential Commodities

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, we shall take up Item No. 9- Discussion under rule 193. I request the hon. Minister, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav to reply to the discussion.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIONS (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to reply to the discussion held on the motion put forward by hon. member Shri Chitta Basu regarding rise in the prices of essential commodities. About 21 hon. Members expressed their views by participating in the discussion. I want to thank all of them because this House discussed this very important issue which is related to the life of the common man. Whether it is the question of prices of wheat or flour, all these are related to the human life. I have considered the points raised during this discussion.

First of all, I would like to give details of the prices of wheat, rice, soft coke, kerosene oil, sold under the Public Distribution System. These commodities are made available by the Central Government under PDS. The price of none of these commodities has increased under the Public Distribution System. You may say that these prices relate to the commodities sold under the Public Distribution System, we want to hold a discussion on the steep rise in the prices of these commodities in the open market. I will come to that also.

Flour has to do much with the common man. Under the PDS, we provide wheat to the States at the rate of Rs.402 per quintal. The States distribute the same through the Fair Price Shops by adding purchasing, transportation and other duties thereon. The price of sugar throughout India is Rs.9.05 per Kg. This is the only commodity whose consumer price is fixed by the Central Government, rest of the commodities are

provided to the public by the State Government after calculating their own margins on these commodities. The rates of Palmoline oil and soft coke are Rs.24/- per Kg (Bulk) and Rs 175/- per tonne respectively, these items are provided to West Bengal and Bihar only. The Government on its part has neither increase these commodities sold under PDS nor decreased the allocation of any State.

Since I have assumed charge of this Department, I have made allotments to States under the PDS on the basis offtake against the demands of the States made on the basis of their population. As far as prices in the open market are concerned the prices of wheat and flour have registered an increase on which there has been so much discussion here. There are certain circumstances responsible for it which I do not want to mention because whatever natural increase has been registered is due to a different factor and which ought not have taken place. I had referred to it in my statement in which I said that I believe in transparency. Therefore I do not want to conceal anything from the House. One of the reasons for the price rise is that we have raised the support prices for the farmers. It was necessary also as it had the consensus of the hon. Members of all parties as also the whole House. If we do not provide remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce, it will indirectly affect the production. The production will be adversely affected. It is necessary to increase the M.S.P. in order to encourage the grower. The specialists have estimated a 5.5 percent increase in prices if continues like this. The 5.5 percent increase registered in the prices of wheat was due to M.S.P. To increase the sell and considering the wider interests of the farmers we can go to any extent.

Petroleum products are inclusive of everything. The increase to the extent of 4 percent. The C.I.P. of wheat has not registered an increase as compared to the last year, it has been stable and it is responsible for the price rise to the extent of 5 percent. So far as production is concerned, production and procurement of wheat was low during the last year. Production depends on rain fall, last year the production was less by 31 lakh tonnes and the procurements which the Government of India makes were less by 41 lakh tonnes, this is responsible for the price rise to the extent of 8 per cent. But the increase in prices registered thereafter has been due to very unfortunate factors. Hoarding and blackmarketing have been responsible for the price rise to the extent of 8 per cent.

Due to slump in the Share-market people desisted from investing there. They had estimated that the prices will increase because the production was low. Some hon. members have also raised this question that the Government did not take effective steps timely. What steps have been taken by the Government, I will give details thereof later on. With the slump going on in the share market people have encouraged hoarding and black-marketing by investing their money in it. There