

13.12 hrs.

Title: Strike by workers of National Jute Mills Ltd. and revival of Jute Industry.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): Sir, jute industry is one of the most important and oldest industries of this country. But the condition of the jute industry is very worse. Most of the jute industries, including NJMC mills are closed. The jute workers are very much distressed. They are facing irreparable loss and injury. Thousands and thousands of jute workers have assembled in the Capital. They have rushed to the Capital from all over the country and are sitting in *dharna*. They are placing their demand. They are agitating. They want to raise this issue to the hon. Prime Minister and to the highest forum of the country.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India to look into the matter seriously and to take appropriate and suitable action for revival of jute industry and to remove the plight of jute workers who are in distress.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Sir, the late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi after seeing the condition of jute growers and workers of Bihar and West Bengal, nationalised a few mills and brought them under the umbrella called NJMC in the seventies. Indiraji not only nationalised jute mills but also formed the Jute Corporation of India to protect the interests of jute growers of Eastern India. One of the largest public sector jute mills is in Howrah.

It is supported by the other jute mills in Bihar, one in Orissa and the others mostly in Bengal. What has happened is that for the last six years, several packages are offered to stabilise the jute mills. But at no point of time did the Government release the funds to stabilise the package. Some of their rights have been taken away. The workers have agreed to it. They have also agreed to reduce the number. One mill by name the Kennyson Jute Mill in Calcutta has almost been closed. One mill in Bihar is almost closed. The hon. Minister, who is coming from Kishangarh, is sitting here. He may also share the view with me that 30 per cent of the rural workers of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are living only on the support of the jute mills of Bengal. If no money order comes from Bengal to the villagers of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, a part of Bihar villages, especially in north Bihar, and significantly Madhya Pradesh also, they cry.

Now, the situation is that the BIFR is almost trying to close the whole thing by giving their judgement, by their observations in such a way. The Government of India is not coming forward to rescue the mills. Today, in the capital, all the jute mill workers are agitating. I am told that the hon. Prime Minister is giving audience to us today. If nothing happens very soon, within a month, the severest law and order problem will take place not only in Bengal but also in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and a part of Bihar. I, therefore, feel that it is not a matter of any State. It is a national issue.

Sir, I talked to the Parliamentary Affairs Minister this morning requesting him to ask Shri Kashiram Rana to be present here. I gave notice in time. About Code of Conduct of Members of Parliament, we discussed many things. But the Government does not take anything seriously. I would like to convey to the hon. Minister that Government should, at least, intervene this week. If it is not done this week, I am afraid, the BIFR will take such steps that the entire NJMC would be in jeopardy....(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE) :Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity. I associate myself with the point which has been raised by the hon. Member Shri Ajoy Chakraborty. I would like to mention here that at the time of partition, most of the jute mills remained in our part of the country. It is known to everybody that thousands and thousands of workers used to work in the jute mills. But, at present, most of the jute mills are facing crisis. So many jute mills are going to be closed abruptly. A few days back, one NJMC unit at Convent Road, Calcutta was closed abruptly and more than 1,500 workers have become jobless.

So, I urge upon the Government, through you, Sir, that the Government should come to the rescue of the workers and it should take the matter seriously. Today, thousands and thousands of workers coming from different parts of the country are demonstrating in the capital.

श्री रतिलाल कालीदास वर्मा (धन्धुका) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, गुजरात में रेल लाइनों को मीटर गेज से ब्रॉड गेज में परिवर्तित करने का काम चल रहा है लेकिन वह काम जिस गति से चलना चाहिए वह उस गति से नहीं चल रहा है, बहुत धीमी गति से चल रहा है। (ब्यवधान)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The Minister concerned is not present. The Government should respond to it....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He is taking note of it. I cannot compel him.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Yesterday, we resolved that the Government should respond to the matter of urgent public importance equally. If the response is on record saying that they will convey to the Minister concerned

to intervene, that is enough. That will satisfy the hon. Members. We are always considered to be disruptionists if we intervene. This is the matter of the workers. The hon. Minister should have been present. Why is the Minister not present here. We gave the notice. The hon. Minister knew about it one month before. He knows that the workers are coming to the capital today. What is happening? I do not know.

श्री रतिलाल कालीदास वर्मा : क्यों आप हर बात में गवर्नमेंट को कहते हैं।

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : गवर्नमेंट को इस पर कुछ कहना चाहिए।

श्री रतिलाल कालीदास वर्मा : होना होता तो अब तक 50 सालों में बहुत कुछ हो गया होता। अभी हमारा नंबर है, हमें बोलने दें।

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : आप जरूर बोलिये, लेकिन मिनिस्टर कुछ कह तो दें।

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री तथा संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री संतो कुमार गंगवार) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह जो मामला उठाया गया है, यह संबंधित मंत्री तक पहुँचा दिया जाएगा।

कुमारी ममता बनर्जी (कलकत्ता दक्षिण) : इस पर फुल डिस्कशन भी होना चाहिए।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : ममता जी, इस मैटर पर रिस्पॉन्स भी दिया है।
