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Title: Regarding enclaves in Cooch Behar and North Bengal.

*SHRI NRIPENDRANATH ROY (COOCH BEHAR) : Hon. Speaker Madam, I take the floor to draw the attention of the Government of India to a very urgent matter of public importance. My constituency is Cooch Behar in West Bengal, which has a burning issue i.e. the issue of enclaves. In 1947, after the separation of the country based on the Two Nation theory, Rangpur and Dinajpur – the large

parts of India were transferred to East Pakistan. At that time Cooch Behar was under the auspices of the Britishers. In 1950, it decided to join the Indian sub-continent. There was much delay about the status of Cooch Behar – whether it will be within Assam or Bengal but then in 1950 it actually joined West Bengal as district Cooch Behar. Much of the land owned by the king of Cooch Behar then became a part of Rangpur and Dinajpur in East Pakistan. On the other hand, land owned by landlords and rulers of Dinajpur became a part of Cooch Behar. These lands are known as 'Chhits' or enclaves.

In 1947, after the partition, before marking the Radcliffe line between India and Pakistan, lands were identified police station wise after all the papers were scrutinized thoroughly – But the border could not be marked properly, as a result of which 135 villages of the king of Cooch Behar remained in the territory of Dinajpur and 95 villages of the then Rangpur and Dinajpur were made part of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri of India. At that time, it was not depicted on any map as bifurcation.

Later in 1958, according to Nehru-Noon treaty, these enclaves were taken into consideration and the treaty was signed. In 1974, the then Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi signed the Indira-Mujib Treaty to forge close bilateral relations between India and the newly established state of Bangladesh. The issue of exchange of enclaves was mentioned in the agreement. Accordingly two large enclaves of Angorpota and Dahagram were ceded to Bangladesh by our kindhearted Prime Minister and in exchange the Berubari enclave was to be given to India. In 1992, India leased Tin Bigha corridor to Bangladesh according to the agreement signed between late Prime Minister of India Shri Narsimha Rao and Begum Khaleda Jia of Bangladesh. From that time, the Tin Bigha movement is going on. There is barbed wire fencing at the border of Cooch Behar and Bangladesh but the exchange of enclaves did not take place. As a result, the people of this area do not have right to vote or right to live or education. The law and order situation is also not very well. Thus the problems of the border area should be solved by the Government immediately. The process of exchange of enclaves should be expedited. Trade and business should be given a boost to improve relations between the two countries and among the SAARC countries also. The Government have to come forth with concrete measures to deal with the Indo-Bangladesh border problems.

With these words, I thank you for allowing me to speak and conclude my speech.

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