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Title: Need to confer Bharat Ratna posthumously on Rani Gaidinilu, famous freedom fighter from North-east.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise here today to raise a very important issue which is very close to my heart. It is regarding Rani Gaidinliu. I am sorry to say, many Members who are present today, do not know who Rani Gaidinliu is. Her Centenary is being observed by her supporters but she needs to be remembered by the nation. Her struggle was not for her alone but for the country. Very few people are born on 26th January and she was born on 26th January, 1915 at Nungkao village in Manipur. She was a fearless freedom fighter who joined the agitation at the age of 13 and headed the movement against the British in the Manipur and Naga belts. In 1932, at the age of 16, she was arrested by the British police and was put behind bars and was convicted that she will be imprisoned for life. She could be freed from jail only after India gained Independence in 1947.

An interesting episode happened in 1937, that is, Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Shillong in 1937, and he made it a point that he would visit Rani Gaidinliu. That 'Rani' name was given by Jawaharlal Nehru to her and she was proclaimed as Rani of North East.

It should be our effort to bring a national hero who has not been popularized at the national level despite her extraordinary range of political struggle. There is a need to rename the Dimapur Airport in her name. A Central university be set up at a suitable place. I would request you, Madam, installation of her portrait in Parliament and statue in Delhi be done at the earliest.

As her birth Centenary is being observed now and it is in all fitness of things to do all such matters to perpetuate the memory of this extraordinary freedom fighter. I would urge upon the Government to confer her Bharat Ratna posthumously. That would be a fitting recognition to the struggle she waged for freedom of this country.

I had the occasion of meeting her and to serve her in 1978 when she visited Cuttack. A number of times, when freedom fighters used to congregate in Delhi, I was just a worker working amongst them and I had the opportunity to be beside her. I think that it is in the fitness of things that this generation and future generation would remember her struggle with all respect. I expect the Government also to put a few words in this matter.

माननीय अध्यक्ष : आपको एक बात और भी मालूम होगी कि उनके नाम से स्त्री-शक्ति-पुरस्कार, भारत सरकार ने वर्ष 2000 में ही स्थापित किया है, जो दिया जाता है। उस समय मैं ही खुद महिला बाल विकास मंत्री थी।

*m03 Shri P.P. Chaudhary, *m04 Shri Shivkumar Udasi and *m05 Shri Devji M. Patel are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab.