

resource remains untapped. It is requested that the Government should pass necessary orders to the ONGC to tap this resource. As Tripura is an industrially backward State, Government should take steps to tap this natural gas and use the same for industrial development of the State. Natural gas should be made available at Rs. 600 per 1000 cubic metre to encourage the entrepreneurs.

I would also request the Government to take initiative for development of Tripura alongwith other North East States by tapping Natural Oil and provide deep boring rig drive for oil exploration from the oil resources below the gas reserves.

(xvii) Need to amend Tenth Schedule of the Constitution containing the "Anti-Defection Law"

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : I want to draw the attention of the House to the Anti-Defection Act, 1985 as well as to the Anti-defection Rules which had been framed on 18 March, 1986. The rules cast a responsibility on the leaders of legislative parties in the House to furnish to the Speaker within 30 days after formation of such legislative party as the case may be.

So, I urge upon the Union Govt. to amend Anti-Defection Law so that any sitting MLA/M.P. who wishes to join another political party, has to resign from MLA/MP and can join.

(xviii) Need to send a Central Team to assess imminent danger to the Pilibhit-Basti Highway due to erosion caused by Sakha river near Aera Khamaria town in Lakhimpur district, U.P. and for construction of a dam to check it

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA (Kheri) : Sakha river near the Aera Khamaria town on Pilibhit Basti highway at a distance of 30 km. from my Constituency, Lakhimpur Kheri has deviated from its original course and is causing land erosion. At present, the river is flowing at a distance of mere 11 feet from the Pilibhit Basti highway thus posing a threat to the highway. In case, the highway is cut off, Aera Khamaria town having a population of ten thousand and Govind Sugar mill located at Aera Khamaria will fall in front of the main course of the river, which will result in heavy loss of life and property. The State Government is treating the matter with indifference and utter neglect. If dams are not constructed before the advent of rains, the flood due to heavy rains will cause heavy loss of life and property and it will not be possible to provide relief in even one third area of this district.

Hence, the Union Government is requested to take necessary measures by getting inspection of the area carried out by a high level committee immediately.

(xix) Need to cancel recruitments made in the State of Orissa after General Election for 12th Lok Sabha were announced

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak) : After the declaration of the election schedules for the 12th Lok Sabha election by the Election Commission of India; it made mandatory on the Govts. both at the Centre and the States that no developmental works and the processes of recruitments against the Govt. jobs be undertaken since model code of conduct made effective at once. But in the State of Orissa the processes of recruitments were undertaken even after such model code of conduct were made effective, the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of January, 1998 in the ICDS Blocks of Balasore district of the State. Hence, it violated the directions of the Election Commission mainly to influence the voters in favour of the party in power in the State.

I, therefore, request, the Union Govt. that the matter may be taken up with Election Commission to ensure that such recruitments made by the State administration in Orissa be annulled immediately so as to start a fresh recruitment processes against the posts advertised for in a free and fair manner to provide justice to all.

(xx) Need to take urgent steps for immediate maintenance of the Tamil Nadu part of Thiruvananthapuram-Kanyakumari N.H. 47

SHRI N. DENNIS (Nagercoil) : The Tamilnadu part of the Thiruvananthapuram - Kanyakumari National Highway N.H. 47 is kept for long in a very bad condition causing difficulties and inconveniences to the passengers and general public. On my repeated representations on the floor of Parliament and to authorities, the Govt. have allocated funds for the proper maintenance of the above referred part of the road about eighteen months back. But the work is yet to be executed. Only some patch up works are done here and there is a casual way instead of carrying out the work in a full-fledged manner as per the allotment. There are lot of pits, cracks and holes in the road and deep trenches are formed on both the sides of the road. Thus frequent accidents are caused. This bad condition of the road is posing grave danger to the passengers and the vehicular traffic. It is one of the busiest roads in the country. Once it was hailed as the longest cement road in India. Now it is blamed as the worst maintained road. Further abandonment would aggravate the situation.

So, I urge the Govt. to take urgent steps for the immediate maintenance of the road at the earliest.

(xxi) Need to ensure that rain water collected during rainy season is removed while converting the metre gauge into broad gauge at Haveri in Karnataka

SHRI B.M. MENSINKAI (Dharwad South) : While converting the metre gauge into broad gauge on

Bangalore Miraj Railway at the District place Haveri in Karnataka under-ground bridge is constructed.

Rain water collected on this bridge is not removed by pump installed due to defect in this equipment. This is a State highway and vehicles cannot pass through this bridge causing considerable hardship to the public. Regular letters of complaint are written to the Railway Department but no action has been taken.

I request the Minister of Railways to take urgent action before the commencement of this rainy-Season from April this year.

(xxii) Need to start construction work for FM Radio Station at Manjeri (Kerala)

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri) : FM Radio Station has been sanctioned for Manjeri (Kerala) and necessary equipment has also been acquired. In spite of repeated requests, the I & B Department has not started its construction work. Manjeri is a backward area and the Government have not fulfilled the assurances even when there is sufficient funds. I urge the Government to start the work of FM Radio Station at Manjeri.

(xxiii) Need to provide better telecom facilities in the Districts of Karbi, Anglong and North Cachar Hills of Assam

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI (Autonomous District Assam) : The telecommunication facilities in the Districts of Karbi, Anglong and North Cachar Hills of Assam is probably the worst in the entire country. The telephone exchanges at the district H.Q. of Diphu and Haflong which are capitals of Autonomous Hill Councils are of outdated model and mostly remain out of order. The sub-divisional headquarters namely Bokajan, Hamren, Maibang do not have proper exchanges. The block H.Qs. and rural townships like Howraghat, Dokmoka, Phulani, Bokulia, Silonijan, Rongmongve, Dolamara, Khironi and Harangajao are also yet to have proper telephone facility. The neglect of this hilly and tribal region by the department has generated serious resentment among the people.

I therefore, request the Hon'ble Minister for Communications to take following steps immediately :

- (i) To upgrade and expand the existing telephone exchanges of Diphu and Haflong and also to restore trunk booking facilities to those exchanges which were shifted to Nagaon and Silchar in recent time.
- (ii) To establish electronic exchanges in all the sub-divisional H.Qs., block H. Qrs. and rural townships mentioned above.
- (iii) To reconstitute the telecom district of Assam circle and carve out separate telecom districts for the Hill districts with H.Qrs. either at Diphu or Haflong.

(xxiv) Need to create a separate State of Bodoland

SHRI SANSJMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY (Kokrajhar) : The initiation of the process for bringing about a peaceful, honorable and lasting political solution to the long-standing, burning and many decade old 'Bodoland Question' has been long overdue. Under the present most crucial and volatile ethno-political, socio-economic and cultural situation and overall turmoiling circumstances mounting in Assam, the question of the aboriginal Bodo people's and other oppressed Tribal groups' survival and existence, their safety and security, their around growth and development and also preservation of their district ethnic self-identity within Assam has really been quite impossible, and an absurd idea. Therefore, immediate creation of the much long awaited separate state of a Bodoland has been a must, and it is the only and lasting political solution to the Bodoland tangle for the greater interest of the nation as a whole.

(xxv) Need to rescue the Tamilnadu Mercantile Bank from taking over by Essar Group

SHRI VAIKO (Sivakasi) : The Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank Ltd. which was earlier called the 'Nadar Bank Ltd.' was promoted by the backward Nadar community of Tamil Nadu in 1921. In October 1994, the Essar Group acquired about 70% of the shares of the bank by offering all kinds of inducements and submitted the shares of the bank for registration for the transfer. The promoter community raised its protest. The Company Law Board gave a verdict in favour of the Essar Group. The Reserve Bank of India considering all the factors rejected the share transfer. As per the settlement reached, the Nadar community is to raise 100 crores in exchange for the disputed shares before 31st December, 1997. While the funds mobilisation drive was on, Sterling Computers reported that it had acquired the shares of the seven companies of Essar Group which had originally acquired the disputed shares of Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank for a consideration of Rs. 135 crores and that it had paid Rs. 51 crore under VDIS for the unaccounted money of Rs. 135 crores with which it had acquired the above shares and that the Forum should pay Rs. 186 crores for the repurchase of the shares.

I request the Central Government to look into the matter.

17.32 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS — Contd.

[English]

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh) : There was an announcement that the Minister of State in the Ministry