

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri): Mr. Speaker Sir, there have been thousands of evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq who anxiously want to go back to Kuwait and Iraq for employment. But it so happened that the present pathetic conditions prevailing in the Regional Passport Office at Calicut have made them suffer more. As there is no sufficient staff, thousands of their applications for passport are still pending clearance. There are about 15,000 to 20,000 passport with the Passport Officer to be disposed of due to want of staff. These people who have come all the way from Kuwait after a lot of suffering are still anxiously waiting to get back for employment. In case there will be any delay, they may even lose their job opportunities in those countries. I hope the Government will address itself to this problem and see that this sort of lethargic attitude is checked.

SHRI PALA K. M. MATHEW (Idukki): Sir I want to raise an urgent matter. The pepper cultivators in Kerala are on a warpath and the situation is assuming explosive proportions. The present price for pepper is quite inadequate and unremunerative. The consequences of devaluation and the Budget have made the situation even worse. Under these circumstances, the minimum price of pepper should be fixed at least at Rs. 7,000 per quintal. I also want to mention another point. Quickwilt, flea beetle and other diseases have devastated vast areas of pepper cultivation. Immediate steps for compensation, grants, aids, rehabilitation, replantation and research should be taken. I request the Commerce Minister and the Agriculture Minister to take immediate steps.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): It is reliably learnt that the Government at the present moment are contemplating to curtail the activities of the Jute Corporation of India. It was a Government of India undertaking which was set up early in the year 1972 for a purely and solely social purpose. The social purpose was to provide the jute growers

of West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh whose number is not less than 4 million, remunerative price so that they may not be pleased by the jute barons and other middle men.

Sir, the JCI, since its inception, has played a positive role and ensured a stable market situation for the jute growers and that did not allow the jute barons to please the jute growers of Western India and other parts of the country. It is also learnt that there is a move on the part of the Government to change the procurement policy with regard to jute and I think that will be very much ruinous for the jute growers of our country. At present the JCI has over 200 purchase centres of its own and co-operatives of another 280 purchase centres. Unless the Government immediately issues instructions to start the purchase operation of raw jute in different parts of the country. I think the jute growers will have to be in a great plight. JCI has got a capacity of mopping up not less than 25 per cent of the total jute production in our country. Sir, I want that the Government should give immediate instructions to JCI in this regard.

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS (Jaipur): Sir, I wish to raise a very serious matter. The Minister of Finance made a Statement to ban recruitment, creation of new posts under Central Government, in order to effect economy in expenditure. This will affect the reserved posts for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Already the backlog of reserved posts, which is being carried forward from the previous year, is not cleared and there will be further accumulation of the reserved posts. This will affect the interests of SC/ST. So, I would like to know from the Minister the stand of the Government in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI D. D. KHANORIA (Kangra): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is acute shortage of kerosene oil in

Kangra and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh. In remote hilly areas, where there is no electricity, people live in the dark. I, therefore, request the Government to make arrangements to provide kerosene to the districts of Chamba and Kangra in Himachal Pradesh.

[English]

SHRI K. P. REDDAIAH (Machhliapatnam): Sir, as on today, the Government of India is passing through a very critical financial crisis. Singareni Colliery Limited has mooted a tender for open mines at the cost of Rs. 600 crores. Two tenders have been received from West Germany and the cost of West Germany tenders proved to be higher by Rs. 200 crores. Singareni Colliery Limited constituted a Committee comprising technicians and financial advisors. It went to Neyveli Lignite Project wherein similar types of open cast mines have been executed by the top Indian firms. They recommended that we should not accept this Company's tender wherein Rs. 200 crores by way of foreign currency has to be paid in excess.

Therefore, Sir, if the Government is serious enough, if the Coal Ministry is serious in this matter, they should immediately send a signal that these tenders should not be accepted and only the local expertise should be utilised in the coal mines.

[Translation]

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (Chimur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a serious matter through you. Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra is a backward district and predominantly a tribal area. About 100 tribals have died in the district because of an outbreak of a serious epidemic during the last one month. The Government came to know about these deaths through a newspaper report. You may be aware that it is the responsibility of the Government to provide medical facilities but there is no such facility in this area. Reason being that the district is in the grip

of naxalites. Crores of rupees are being spent on the Action Plan which is meant to deal with the naxalites. If there is increase in these incidents the Government ignores it as a mere law and order problem. But now when about 100 tribals have died of an epidemic nothing has been done. My question relates to both the Health Ministry and the Home Ministry. I would urge the Government through you, to check such incidents there. Many people have died there recently and they have not been identified. I therefore, request the Government to pay attention in this direction.

[English]

SHRI RAM NAIK (Bombay-North): There has been a very serious Railway accident in my constituency-Bombay-North between Borivli and Dahisar. It took place this morning in the crowded peak hours.

The point is that I have been informed that the overhead wires which are live and which supply electricity to local train motors, were cut off. I have been also informed that some persons have died. I do not know what is the number. I only demand that the Railway Minister while replying to the Railway Budget, today, should make a statement and give the facts.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI JAFFER SHARIEF): Only one person has died. About 20 people are injured. The General Manager is there on the spot. Everything is being taken care of. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now my hon. friend, Shri Manoranjan Bhakta made a submission about the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A news item has appeared in Indian Express as well as in a local daily that apart from the Andamans the LTTE detenus are being shifted to Lakshdweep also. I feel that this attitude on the part of the Govern-