

growing farmers of the above districts are also the sufferers. Due to delay in taking action by the Board of Industrial Financial Rehabilitation to hand over the unit to a suitable promoter, the hardship faced by both the mills workers and farmers is worsening day-by-day. I, therefore, request the Government to instruct BIFR to hand over the above sugar mill to a suitable promoter.

[*Translation*]

(iv) Need to enquire into the alleged irregularities committed by Gas Authority of India

SHRI ISHWAR CHAUDHARY (Gaya): Sir, it is a matter of great concern that Gas Authority of India is incurring an annual loss of about Rs. 70 crores. There are several reasons for it but I would like to draw your attention towards two points only. In the recent elections the Gas Authority of India got printed colored Calendars to be utilised for election campaign and in lieu of that a contract of Rs. 20 crores for HBJ extension pipeline was awarded to it without filing any tender.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards one more reason for loss. The Snam Progetti an Italian company has been benefited by awarding contract of Tripura Pipe line project. Many other companies had submitted tenders for it. The rate quoted by Snam Company were just double as compared to the rates of other companies. Not only that, their tender was received late by two months but even then the contract was awarded to this company in violation of all the rules.

The top officials of Gas Authority of India have misused their position. Therefore, I would request the Government of India that a high level inquiry should be conducted to probe into these financial irregularities and action should be taken against all the top officials involved in it.

[*English*]

(v) Need to provide speedy railway transportation facilities for betel leaves in West Bengal

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamluk): Sir, the growers and traders of betel leaves in West Bengal have been facing a very serious situation due to the inadequate facilities provided for the transportation of betel baskets by the Railways.

West Bengal produces two-thirds of the betel leaves produced in our country. Being highly perishable, betel leaves need quick transportation by the Railway from Mecheda, Panskura, and Bagnan Railway Stations on South-Eastern Railway and Howrah, Sealdah, Srirampur Railway Stations on the Eastern Railway. In Bagnan and Srirampur Railway Stations there are no facilities for the transportation of betel baskets as no major trains stop there and in other Railway Stations either facilities are inadequate or the trains do not carry regular empty V.P.S. for loading betel baskets.

Therefore, I urge upon the Railway Minister to take the following steps for the quick and regular transportation of betel baskets from various Railway Stations of West Bengal to other parts of the country:

- 1) Regular monitoring of the transportation of betel baskets in Howrah and Sealdah Railway Station, particularly in 8034 UP, 8005 UP, 8002 UP, 8015 UP trains of South Eastern Railway and 3211 UP, 2303 UP, 2381 UP, 3007 UP, 3005 UP, 3009 UP trains of Eastern Railway.
- 2) Stoppage of 8030 UP at Bagnan Station, Stoppage of 3009 UP at Srirampur Station and stoppage of 8002 UP trains at Mecheda Station.
- 3) Supply of regular V.P.S. in 8030 UP and 7034 UP trains.