

12.09 hrs.

**STATEMENT RE : REPORTED
PLANS OF UNION CARBIDE
CORPORATION FOR OUT OF
COURT SETTLEMENT OF
COMPENSATION CLAIMS
OF BHOPAL GAS VICTIMS**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : Reports have appeared in the Press stating that Union Carbide has entered into a tentative settlement with the attorneys of private plaintiffs. Government has not approved any settlement as reported in the press. The Government also does not recognise the competence of the private plaintiffs to enter into any such alleged settlement—nor is the Government bound by the same. The Government does not consider the amount of the alleged settlement adequate or fair or acceptable. Government can only settle for an amount which would provide full and fair compensation to all the victims and the damages to property and environment. It is unnecessary to emphasize that there cannot be any settlement unless the Government is a party to the same and agrees to it. The Government alone can represent all the victims in its capacity as *parens patriae* as well as under the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985. Further, the victims have given authority in favour of the Government to represent them in the Bhopal Gas Leak case.

I want to assure the House that all possible steps are being and will be taken to protect the interests of the victims and the public fully.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) : Will it be by the 21st century? Already one year and more has passed. You go and see the condition of those people.

MR. SPEAKER : That can be discussed later.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) : There are also reports that the Union Carbide is transferring its assets.

MR. SPEAKER : I know. They are also taking steps. That is what they said on that day.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Mahbubnagar) : The Union Carbide is transferring its assets.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : They have not agreed to any settlement, that is true. But the Company is trying to outmanoeuvre. They should tell us what steps they are taking.

MR. SPEAKER : About that the Minister in the House on that day said that they are taking full steps to protect that also.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : They dragged us to the American courts and now the company is trying to out-manoeuvre...

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : You may discuss it.

[English]

You can have a discussion also later on.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Already sixteen months have passed and nobody has got a pie.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : We want to know whether Government is moving in the U.S. courts against the transfer of the assets?

MR. SPEAKER : Tiwariji what about the liquidation efforts which they are trying.

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI : We are taking all possible legal steps to ensure that our interests are protected.

12.12 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

- (i) Need to take measures by bringing out suitable legislation to save metropolitan cities from the menace of pollution

SHRI ANOOPCHAND SHAH (Bombay North) : There are number of industrial units in Bombay, creating lot of pollution in a residential zone. As per the present

law, it is difficult for State Government to take severe action against such industrial units. Government of India should consider the matter seriously and come forward with a suitable bill for the whole country to save Metropolitan cities from pollution. In Bombay, at Goregaon there is one tyre factory creating lot of pollution in the area. It is very very difficult for people to stay in that area. Pollution from this factory may result in a big hazard in the near future if Government does not take severe action.

I request hon. Minister for Environment to take serious note and introduce an effective Bill immediately and give necessary instructions to State Government to take more effective and severe steps against such industrial units.

- (ii) Need to issue commemorative stamps in the memory of great leaders of the people's movement of the country including late Godavarish Mishra

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY (Puri) : Sir, late Godavarish Misra and late Nilakantha Das were in the forefront of freedom movement and their contribution to the cause of freedom struggle in Orissa and in the country is inspiring. They were the leaders of Oriya Movement and carried on struggle for emergence of Orissa as a separate State. They had given new interpretation to the enriched cultural heritage of Orissa and had created a new vision of social and cultural approach of the State. They led social and religious reformist movement, which generated new awakening amongst the people of Orissa. They were the builders of modern Orissa. They were the distinguished Oriya writers of that epoch. They were outstanding Parliamentarians of the country, who have created new records of oratory and eloquence in Parliament and State legislature. They had sponsored the cause of the nation and common people in uncompromising terms.

Centenary of late Godavarish Misra is being celebrated this year. I urge upon the Government to issue postal stamps in memory of the great leaders of the people's movement of the country.

12.14 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

- (iii) Need to provide immediate relief to the tobacco growers of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh

SHRI SRIHARI RAO (Rajahmundry) : The tobacco growers in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh are facing serious problems due to failure of their crops, because of which there has been a low yield of tobacco. However, the quality of the tobacco is good.

But the maximum support price for purchase of tobacco fixed by the Government of India is only Rs. 1250 per quintal. Actually it should not be less than Rs. 1800 a per quintal as before, quality-wise. But the tobacco farmers are not able to get even the support price of Rs. 1250 per quintal due to collusion amongst the buyers during auctions who are mostly exporters of tobacco to foreign countries for which the Government has given them export orders. Licences of such traders and exporters should be cancelled forthwith to protect the farmers from complete ruination starvation and deaths. The farmers are already on strike which is bound to escalate and cause further problems.

One of the platforms for auction of tobacco is at Torredu whete tobacco worth Rs. 25 lakhs is auctioned daily. This auction continues for three months during which business worth Rs. 20 crores is transacted. The farmers have stopped selling their produce due to the loss being suffered by them.

I, therefore, request you kindly to look into this matter personally and provide immediate relief to the tobacco growers of East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh.

- (iv) Need to reconsider the decision of closing down of R.M.S. Offices and Branch Post Offices

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : Sir, millions and millions of people are facing a lot of difficulties and great inconvenience in getting their postal daks and articles sent by post due to the recent decision of the Government to close down many Railway Mail Service (R.M.S.) Offices