

[Shri Virdhi Chander Jain]

war-footing and drinking water is made available there without delay. Also, the Railways should not charge any freight for fodder sent from other States so that the cattle could be saved.

[English]

- (ii) Need to restore ESI benefits to cashew works

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR (Quilon) : Cashew is a vitally important traditional industry in Kerala and one and a half lakhs cashew workers, 98 per cent of whom are women get only a maximum of 90 to 100 days work in a year due to various problems besetting the industry. The cashew workers had so far been eligible for ESI benefits if they had worked for at least one day in 13 independent weeks in a six month period i.e. if 13 stamps or joint contributions of workers and employees were put in a half-year.

Now by reason of the amendment brought about by the Employees State Insurance (Amendment) Act, 1984 the entire cashew workers are being denied this already existing benefit. The Amendment stipulates that there should be work for 91 days in a six-month period for ESI benefit to be available—a condition impossible to attain in cashew industry. This denial of an existing right of cashew workers has apparently crept into the amendment inadvertently due to lack of proper consultation with the Kerala State Government.

It is imperative that the Government of India immediately corrects this anomaly and restores the ESI benefits to the cashew workers, who represent one of the most deprived and disadvantaged section of workers in India, by restoring *status quo* or providing for a minimum of 45 days of work as against the amended stipulation of 91 days in six months in section 47 of the amended Act. This has been strongly recommended by the

Kerala State Government. The Government of India may be pleased to move an amendment immediately for the purpose and redress this genuine grievance which will otherwise remain a black mark on the progressive and pro-labour policies of this Government.

- (ii) Need to take immediate steps to check pollution of atmosphere and water caused by the chemical and gas based industries in and around Vadodra

SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD (Baroda) : The City of Vadodra, has a large concentration of chemical and gas based industries in and around it, creating air, land and water pollution in the surrounding neighbourhood. Crops from surrounding lands are constantly damaged year after year. Water, which was drinkable is not so any more due to seepage of chemical water into these water resources. The air has become polluted but absolutely no action has been taken by any authority to stop this.

The recent tragedy of Bhopal which took so many lives and made so many more helpless and blind, has created a panic amongst the people of Vadodra. Immediate action is necessary to stop pollution with the constitution of a high powered committee to look into the grievances and hardships of the affected people and a permanent monitoring cell should be set up to stop further pollution, before the whole matter gets out of hand and a similar Bhopal tragedy takes place. A proper inquiry with immediate steps is what will put the minds of the people of the neighbourhood at peace.

- (iv) Exploitation of migrant workers at work site of Vizag Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh and need to provide better facilities and wages to these workers

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska) : The migrant workers engaged at the

work site of the proposed Vizag Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh are facing innumerable difficulties. Most of them are taken from Ganjam district, Orissa by the agents of the contractors with a promise to pay them wages handsomely. But it is regrettable that they are forced to work for more than eight hours a day. They are kept in an unhygienic condition. They do not get medical treatment when they fall ill or meet with any accident while working. It is a matter of great concern that 77 workers from Ganjam district of Orissa died due to lack of proper treatment. Fifty of them died on account of cholera and 27 died when they met with accident while working. If the surviving workers continue to work in the same unhygienic atmosphere then there will be many more untimely deaths. Hence the protection of the migrant workers needs urgent attention of the Government of India.

In view of this, I request the concerned Ministers to direct the project authority to provide accommodation facilities, health services and better wages to the workers engaged in the preliminary works of the proposed Steel Plant at Vizag. The kith and kin of deceased should be provided adequate compensation forthwith.

- (v) Need to formulate a National Sports Policy and training to participants keeping in view the next Olympics at Seoul

**SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI (Howrah) :** To enable us to participate effectively in the next Olympic in Seoul, 1988 immediate steps should be taken to formulate the policies of each sports discipline and an extensive training programme should be launched.

In this regard I draw the attention of the Sports Ministry to the fact that

they must immediately get in touch with the Indian Olympic Association so as to ascertain the reasons of failure in each discipline in the last Olympic and accordingly take steps for improvement and arrange necessary financial and infrastructural support.

A National Sports policy keeping in view the next Olympics and the immediate target of Asian Games formulated and necessary available foreign coaches be brought. These steps will have tremendous effects. Other countries have already started their plan and programme. If we delay we may not get competent foreign coaches and therefore the urgency.

- (vi) Sharp fall in the price of undigenous rubber and need to stop the import of rubber and purchase of surplus rubber by Government

**SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL (Muvattupuzha) :** During the last few months price of rubber crashed from Rs. 18 to Rs. 15 per kilogram. Imported rubber is costing more than Rs. 17. For saving the small and marginal rubber cultivators I request the Commerce Minister to stop all the import and distribution of imported rubber immediately. Further I appeal to the Government of India to purchase all the surplus rubber in the market through STC, Rubber Board, or Rubber Marketing Federation for a minimum price of Rs. 18 per kilogram and save the poor cultivators.

- (vii) Agitation by Kendriya Vidyalaya Teacher and need for dialogue with their representatives

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) :** I wish to draw the attention of the House towards an urgent matter of public importance of Kendriya Vidyalaya as all over the country are going to observe 23rd March, 1985 as 'Black Day'. They will wear black badges and hold recess meetings. They have been forced to register strong protest against the ban imposed on the entry