

[Shri D. L. Baitha]

This section not only connects the far off areas of Bihar, on the Border of Nepal with the other parts of the country, but it is the only gateway to Nepal. This line is the direct, easy and the shortest route from Nepal to Calcutta post. In addition the railways need to convert this line into broad-gauge on economic grounds also. For journey or for sending goods to Calcutta, Gorakhpur, Patna, Delhi etc. transshipment is required at Katihar because after Katihar there is a broad gauge line. Therefore, this not only causes delay in the transportation of goods, but the transshipment costs more and the goods are also damaged. Moreover, you will have to spend more on construction work for making proper arrangements for transshipment at Katihar.

A survey of the present Katihar-Jogbani sector has already been conducted and the Railway officers with a view to provide security, long about and development of trade and improvement in passenger facilities have strongly recommended its conversion into a broad-gauge line. I would, therefore, like to urge the government that the Jogbani-Katihar section (North-Eastern Frontier Railway) should be converted into broad-gauge at the earliest.

[English]

(iii) Need to increase the procurement price of iron-ore procured by M.M.T.C. from Hospet in Bellari District

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI (Bellary): I wish to draw attention to the grievances of the iron ore mine owners and suppliers from Hospet in Railway District.

Two sector is contributing five million tonnes of all grades of iron-ore for export, out of which the million tonnes is supplied by the private mine owners of the area and the rest by

N.M.D.C. Therefore, the mining industry is an export-oriented industry. There are 76 mining leases in the area and two million tonnes are produced by employing both men and machines. 25,000 direct and 25,000 indirect labourers are employed. It is a matter of regret that M.M.T.C. of India which is the sole purchaser of the entire ore, is not meeting the minimum demands of the mine-owners. In fact, during the year 1983, the M.M.T.C. reduced the procurement price by one per cent whereas it paid higher price towards port charges, railway freight, etc. The ore is purchased at a very low price of Rs. 60 a tonne, whereas it is purchasing at Rs. 100 from N.M.D.C. The industry is in a crisis and the economy of the district is jeopardised. I request that immediate relief to provided by declaring suitable increase in the procurement price of iron-ore by the M.M.T.C.

[Translation]

(iv) Need to arrange Halt of Express trains at Habibganj near Bhopal

SHRI K. N. PRADHAN (Bhopal): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, due to non-stoppage of express trains at Habibganj railway station, about three lakh people of T. T. Nagar and BHEL region of Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh who have come there from different parts of the country are facing serious difficulties.

They have to go to and come from Bhopal railway station which is at a distance of 8 to 15 kms. A lot of money has to be spent on auto-rikshaw and taxi, and during nights often no transport is available for going to or coming from Bhopal. For outgoing journey, the passengers have to reach the railway station hours before. Similarly after alighting from night trains, the passengers are forced to stay at the station for the night.

Due to this reason, there is heavy rush at the Bhopal Station. Because