

of the House to the following matter under rule 377.

Fruit and wheat crops have been completely damaged by the rains and hailstorms in Himachal Pradesh and the State Government is not in a position to pay compensation for the loss. There have been rain and hailstorms for 7 to 8 days in the State. I would, therefore, request the Government to grant Rs. 50 crores to the State Government for providing assistance to the people. A study team should also be sent there to visit every district of the Himachal Pradesh which should survey the loss amounting to billions of rupees and submit report to the Government

I request the Government to take up this matter on a priority basis.

[English]

(iv) Demand for adequate funds for expansion of Bhubaneswar airport as an International Airport

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK (Cuttack): The Government of India have taken a decision to construct some International Airports in the country during the seventh Plan period. Bhubaneswar airport has been identified for development as an International airport under that programme, but funds have not been provided by the Centre for that purpose.

Orissa is richly endowed with tourist potential. Tourists from all over India and abroad come to Orissa to see its fascinating sea beaches, ancient archaeological monuments and the luxuriant forests, rich in wild life. A number of international travel writers who had visited the State in the recent past have opined that the tourist potential of Orissa is immense and could be well considered

as one of the best in the country. So, provision of adequate air journey facility is very necessary in order to attract the foreign tourists. This would become possible if Bhubaneswar airport is soon raised to the standard of International Airport. The State Government is financially not sound enough to bear the cost of the expansion programme. Once Bhubaneswar airport becomes the International Airport the flow of foreign tourists to Orissa will increase and thereby India will earn more foreign exchange. Thus the development of Bhubaneswar airport as an international airport is necessary not only in the interest of the State but also in the interest of the country.

As such, I request the Central Government to bear the entire cost of the construction and expansion of Bhubaneswar airport as an International airport.

(v) Need to take necessary measures to safeguard the interests of betel leaf growers in the country

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore): The betel, which is popularly known as "Pan" is cultivated as a distinctive crop in different States in the country. It provides livelihood to about 20 lakhs families in Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Its cultivation extends over an area of 40,000 hectares and the annual turnover from its sales is about Rs. 700 crores. The country earns good amount of foreign exchange from the export of Pan and it could be increased further.

The importance of Pan is the cultural life of India is known to everybody and for millions of Indians their daily routine remains incomplete, without chewing a Pan. But this traditional Pan cultivation has received a set back owing to economic losses suffered by the