

(Silchar): Sir, since 1980-81, the Ramnagar Depot of FCI had been losing heavily -5 to 7 per cent in most years and even 10 per cent in some in the name a transit loss. But now it as come to light that all that grain was stolen. Officials at the depot or elsewhere were forced to connive and those who refused were summarily transferred. The don behind this mafia crime is said to be a former MP of Silchar who is also a close confidant of a Union Minister of the present Cabinet.

During the period from 1980-81 to 1990-91, rice and wheat worth Rs. 15.65 crore were shown as 'transit loss'. The scam came to light after Mr. N.R. Ghosh took over the charge of District Manager. As a result, he was threatened of dire consequences, failing which, the mafia tried to purchase him by bribery. That also failed. Then, an offer of Rs. 10 lakh came from a former Silchar MP for transferring Mr. Ghosh to FCI zonal office, Guwahati.

Sources allege that one Union Minister is also a beneficiary of this racket, though the Minister on being asked by journalists, denied his involvement. At the instance of FCI, CBI is inquiring into the matter. A CBI official investigating the scandal says, "The strong-man and their patrons are all from Silchar".

It is a fact that it will not be easy to succeed on the part of Government and CBI when high political profiles are patrons. But inaction in the matter will tremendously hamper FCI work in the North-East and the muck will stick on the Centre. This matter should be looked into thoroughly.

DR. ASIM BALA (Nabadwip): Sir, the workers are suffering in our country, particularly in the Eastern Railway. You know that especially in these hard days, there are no jobs and people are unemployed. The people start hawking in the railway stations and compartments in a very difficult manner. But the Railway authorities are very harsh. They are not giving any permission even though a demand is made for some licence or permission in the railway stations as well as Railway compartments. So, it is my demand and

request that the Railway authorities should give permission in the form of licence. So that lakhs and lakhs of youth will get alternative jobs. I request for this demand to the Railway authorities and the Government.

SHRI MRUTYVNJAYA NAYAK(Phulbani): Sir, time and again, I have repeatedly mentioned in the House that I belong to a very backward district of Phulbani in the State of Orissa. There is a long persistent demand in my district for TV relay centres at Phulbani and Sonpur. In 1974, because of Mrs. Gandhi's policy, some facilities were provided like adopting the device of antenna system, etc. Soon after the abolition of those facilities, my people are very much aggrieved because my district is backward both economically and educationally. I would wish that your kind self will give direction to the Minister concerned to expedite those facilities.

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN(Barpeta): Mr. Speaker Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the acute problem of starvation faced by the tribals in Tripura. This question had been raised repeatedly in the House in the past but no proper steps have been taken so far to save the lives of the tribals in Tripura. They are dying like flies. More than 500 people have already died. But the Government is not giving any help by way of food medicines or in development work particularly in rural areas of that region. So, these people are suffering from starvation and hunger related diseases also. They are dying like flies. At the same time, we have seen that instead of taking some human steps for giving relief to the tribal people of that area, the Coalition Ministry there are using other repressive measures which are inhuman. When these tribal people are suffering from starvation, various repressive measures are being taken. Many women belonging to tribals are raped, gang raped, and some of them are killed. Recently, TADA, was used throughout the State and innocent tribal youths who are under custody are being harassed and tortured brutally. At the same time it is now in the air that, entire tribal areas are sought to

be declared as disturbed areas. All these things show that the Tripura coalition Government is launching an undeclared war against the tribal people there. Instead of standing in favour of the rights of the tribals, they are harassing them and the tribals are sought to be eliminated from the area. Therefore, I request the Government, through you, to come to the help of the tribal people and take steps so that TADA and other repressive measures are withdrawn, relief is given to the people, democracy prevails, unity among the tribal and non-tribal people prevail in the State. I again request the Government through you, to take some measures in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): Sir, it is unfortunate that a sweeping remark has been made by the hon. Member. I do not want to go into any dispute with him. I would like the House to apprise of the facts. There were deaths in Tripura due to some disease. When this came out in the newspaper, the Tripura Government took some action. Not only that when this matter was raised in the House the Prime Minister instructed me to visit that area. I went to the remote areas in helicopter and visited all the places. I took corrective steps to see that medical aid is provided to them. After my return, I submitted the report to the Prime Minister. The Union Health Minister then sent a team to visit that area and find out the type of disease which was spreading there. Medicine worth Rs. 125 lakh was given by the Government of India to the State Government. Not only that the Prime Minister allocated another Rs. 84 lakhs out of his discretionary fund for those people. Steps have been taken to see that such disease do not recur.

It has been alleged that these are starvation deaths. These are not starvation deaths. These are deaths due to some disease. Unfortunately, some aspersion is being cast on the Tripura Government and I strongly repudiate it. Even now if you want to have discussion or anything of the sort, it

is up to you to decide but I would like to put on record that there is no starvation death in Tripura. Death due to disease should not be termed politically as starvation death. It is not desirable.

SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS (Karimganj): Train service in Badarpur-Bhairabi section, mainly in Hailakaudi District, Assam, is not at all keeping in time. Old worn-out steam engine with back dated coaches is running on unaugmentable meter-gauge track with a speed of not more than 15 to 20 kilometers per hour. In 24 hours only one pair of train is running in this section, that also is quite irregular. So, people there have begun to say, "No service is better than such kind of dis-service." The train service in entire Barak Valley has not all improved and Badarpur-Bhairabi section is one of the glaring examples.

*So, I urge upon the Railway Ministry to look into the matter and to instruct the N.F. zonal authority to improve the train service in Barak valley particularly that of Badarpur-Bhairabi section.*

12.57 hrs

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the chair*]

SHRI KODIKKUNIL SURESH (Adoor): Sir, the monsoon period, that is the months of July, August, September and October, is considered to be the difficult period for the day-to-day life of the common man in the State of Kerala. The prices of essential commodities take an increasing trend during this period. Kerala is the only State in the country where rationing system exists. Of course, Kerala is a deficit State in the rice production. At present, the monthly allocation of rice to our State is 1,50,000 MT. The national festival of Kerala falls in the month of September. All the people in Kerala celebrate Onam as a national festival. It is needless to say that the prices of essential commodities will shoot up in the open market during this period. Keeping this in view