

12.00 hrs.

[Translation]

*SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat): Coffee growers in India are mostly small farmers. 95% of the coffee plantation are owned by them. The economic well-being of the coffee growers is a measure of the economic process of the country. The export cess on coffee recently introduced by the Central Government is likely to seriously affect the production. This step will only prevent the coffee growers from benefitting from the increased coffee price in the international market. It will only help the multinational companies which are engaged in the production and distribution of instant coffee.

I would, therefore, request that the export cess on coffee should be withdrawn forthwith.

12.01 hrs.

RE: BOYCOTT OF THE HOUSE BY THE
MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION
PARTIES ON A.T.R. ISSUE

[English]

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri): It is a matter of regret for all of us that the Opposition is still continuing its boycott of the House. I would like to avail of the occasion to ask the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs or the Treasury Benches whether there is any dialogue going on between the Government and the Opposition. Is there any concrete proposal put forward by the Government for the consideration of the Opposition or

is there any mutual discussion going on between them? I know that no decision has been taken in the matter.

The House may be informed about it because the most important national issues like the housing policy, sugar policy and some other policies are going to be discussed in this House. So in these discussions the presence of the Opposition in the House is very much essential in a Parliamentary democracy for a very good dialogue and a discussion.

Has the Government made any proposal to them? Is anything under consideration at this point of time?

SHRI P. G. NARAYANAN (Gobichettipalayam): This is the second week that the Opposition parties are boycotting the parliamentary proceedings. This is an extraordinary situation. I think this is the longest boycott of the Opposition in the history of Indian Parliament.

When important matters are discussed in the House, when policy matters are discussed in the House, the Opposition should be present in the House. Today, the Housing Policy is listed in the Order Paper. We are going to discuss the Agriculture Policy and the Culture Policy also. So, on this occasion, the Opposition parties should be present in the House. The demand of Opposition parties should not be neglected so lightly.

The Government should spell out what they are going to do about it. Are they allowing the situation to prolong or

will any new initiative be taken to restore normalcy in the House?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): I would also like to say something about it. I am sure the Government is not disinterested in this matter, the Government is very much interested in this matter. The Government has been taking interest to see that some settlement is arrived at. But, it is unfortunate that though several discussions had taken place and the hon. Speaker had also taken a very great initiative in this respect, there has not been a final settlement in this matter.

Many courses were put forward by the Government. I could be even a suspension of the Report for some time so that keeping it suspended for some time the Opposition would come forward and discuss this matter. But, I think, even for that there had not been a consensus.

Now we have read in the papers that there is another suggestion regarding sending this matter for arbitration to the hon. Speaker of Lok Sabha and the hon. Chairman of Rajya Sabha. Now, these are the courses which could be thought of.

There is also one initiative which can come from the Government and that is by calling the Opposition or calling all the leaders of parties or groups for discussion in this regard. I think that is also one course which is left because the other discussions which had ensued were not, as a matter of fact, from the side of the Government as such. If an initiative is taken by the Government by calling an all party meeting, I think, there could be a better settlement.

We are all concerned and I am sure the whole House is concerned in this

matter. The matter should not be further stalled. So I suggest and I plead with the hon. Prime Minister, Government as well as the Opposition to come forward and arrive at a settlement, whatever be the differences at this stage, in the larger interest of the country, in the larger interest of the burning issues that are before this nation and this Parliament.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM SARAN YADAV (Khagaria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards some problems, of the Northern Bihar. The floods have caused havoc specially in Khagaria district and in many other districts of the Northern Bihar and cholera has also been broken out there. There is neither any facility of hospitals, nor of medicines nor of administering glucose there. There is also no arrangements for bandage there. Bihar Government have gone bankrupt. People are dying there. The floods are at its worst. My submission is that direction should be given to the Central Government so that the State Government can do something for the welfare of the people of Bihar.

[English]

SHRI E. AHAMED: Sir, I may be permitted to ask the hon. Minister or somebody to respond to what we have said about these things. The nation knows what efforts are being made by the hon. Speaker. We would like to know what action the Government is taking in this matter. The Government may please say because they may also have several suggestions. It is better always and it is desirable to have some say on the part of the Government as to what action the Government is proposing to take and what action the Government have already

taken in this regard. I think, the hon. Members of this House, at least, should know that.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: In fact, we were expecting that the Prime Minister would give a reply. Anyway, we hope that a reply would come from the hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister and a further suggestion for settlement would also come from the side of the Government in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS) AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK): Sir, first of all, I wish to state that we are grateful to you for having taken lot of efforts to see that the situation is resolved and the Opposition gets back to the House and participate in the proceedings of the House.

Sir, as everybody is aware, the hon. Prime Minister has stated that we have an open mind and in several meetings which have been chaired by you, we have time and again stated that we have an open mind. If there is a disagreement, we have time and again stated that let those issues be discussed so that if there are certain things in the Action Taken Report, those things can also be amended or augmented, whatever the case may be.

It is unfortunate that still today this matter has not been resolved. But we do feel that participation of the Opposition Members in the functioning of the parliamentary system of democracy is extremely important. In view of that we have always participated in the discussion and we have time and again stated that we are open to any suggestion which can

resolve the situation which is there at the moment.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Sir, the open mind is not going to solve the problem. Open mind has been there and it has been declared earlier also. We would like to know specifically, whether the Government will take any initiative and whether the Government call a conference of all the parties concerned. I think that is what we have to think at this stage.

So far the Government has not called any conference of all the parties. We would like to see that the Government is coming forward to call such a conference of all parties, at least, to see that a settlement could be arrived at.

SHRI E. AHAMED: Sir, I may make one submission on what the hon. Minister has said. He says that the Government has an open mind and let the suggestions come.

There may be many suggestions. Certain suggestions were made in the meetings convened by the hon. Speaker, I would like to know the proposal of the Government of this matter, whether the Government have any proposal and whether there are any objection by the Opposition... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ahamed, let the proposals from both sides not be discussed here before there is an agreement on them. Let them be discussed outside.

SHRI E. AHAMED: Sir, I am not going to say anything on them. I want to know whether the Government have made any proposal on this matter and if they have any proposal, the House may be informed about that.

Sir, I would like to submit to this House that the Government has an onerous responsibility in this matter. Of course, the hon. Speaker has taken initiatives to solve impasse. But, I would like to know the steps taken by the Government in this matter. The Government is responsible to this House as well as to the nation. The Government should say about the steps taken or proposed to be taken by them in this matter and whether they want to discuss it in an all-Party meeting. Let the Government say whether they have put forward any proposal before the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: Let those proposals from both sides be discussed in their meeting. If they agree upon them, then they can come to the House. If you give the proposal on the floor of the House, you know, it does not help in arriving at an agreement.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARPAL PANWAR (Kairana): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise the issue of setting up of a bench of Allahabad High Court in the Western Uttar Pradesh. It is very old demand of the people of the Western Uttar Pradesh.

12.12 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Uttar Pradesh is a big State both areawise and populationwise. The High Court is in Allahabad. That is far away from 15-20 districts of the Western Uttar Pradesh and it is a few kilometres away from some other districts. This proposal was sent to the Central Government by the Banarsi Dass Government in 1980. Later on the lawyers and the people of the

Western Uttar Pradesh started an agitation to draw the attention of the Government. The Central Government has accepted the proposal of setting up of a division bench here since a few districts are far away from the Allahabad High Court and the people have to face so many difficulties to reach Allahabad by bus or by train and it is not a hidden fact for anyone. The Government claims to provide inexpensive justice to each person but it is obvious from the sufferings of these people that they are not being taken care of. A number of proposals have been sent to the Central Government from time to time. Besides it, the number of judges in the Allahabad High Court from the Western Uttar Pradesh is negligible and the number of the lawyers from this area is also very limited. My submission is that the division bench of the High Court is a must in the Western Uttar Pradesh. The people cannot tolerate it anymore. This demand should be accepted by Government and the division bench should be set up.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV (Sahasra): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Law is present here, he can inform us about it. This proposal is lying pending with the Central Government.

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI (Saidpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a very old demand. It has been an issue of discussion in the House since 1980.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Surya Narayan Yadav, if you want anything to be specifically answered, there is a systematic procedure for that. Kindly adopt that procedure. Let it be

discussed on the floor of this House and you will also get a reply on that. This is a Zero Hour. Let us follow the procedure.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: The hon. Minister of Law is present here. This proposal is lying pending with the Central Government.

[English]

I do agree with that.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): What about me, Sir?
(Interruption)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not call your name. We shall have to end by 12.32. So your cooperation is absolutely essential. Shri R. Anbarasu please. You are expected to have a holiday because you are married recently.

SHRI R. ANBARASU (Madras Central): Sir, there are about eighty thousand FCI workers employed in the Food Corporation of India. Most of them are under contract labour. Recently, the Central Government under various notifications prohibited the employees of contract labour in all the Depots of FCI in the entire country. But the management has failed to comply with these statutory notifications and contract labour is still employed in the depots. A large number of depots have been closed to avoid the implementation of notification prohibiting contract labour.

Sir, especially in Kerala, the contract labourers took out a very big agitation against the FCI management. They were all arrested and they were imprisoned under the Essential Commodities Act. It is

very unfortunate that instead of solving the problem, they resort to such penal action against the innocent workers.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All details are not necessary. The purpose is to bring the matters to the notice of the Government.

SHRI R. ANBARASU: Right, Sir, the FCI workers' Union have entered an agreement with the FCI Management and the terms of the agreement between the FCI workers Union and FCI Management have not been implemented so far and, therefore, Sir, there is a danger of all depots being closed in the South. This problem is being mis-managed by the managers of the FCI. Therefore, I urge upon the hon. Minister to take immediate steps to solve this crisis and to implement the agreement between the FCI management and Workers' Union.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Very disturbing facts have been revealed by the arrest of one of the accused in the bomb blast case.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Thomas, you have given your name to speak about FCI.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: I have given my name to speak on this matter also which is very important.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you have got anything to say about FCI, you can say.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Regarding FCI Employees' Union, along with all the Unions in the FCI, they have formed a Confederation and they have given notice of a strike and they have already started *dharna* before the head office and all the

zonal offices and that is going on from 8th onwards and it is likely that unless the matter is settled, they will go on strike from 11th to 12th August which will be followed by three holidays from 13th to 15th August. If that is so, the whole distribution is going to be affected. I would request the Government to talk to them and to bring a settlement at the earliest.

SHRIMATI KAMALA KUMARI KARREDDULA (Bhadrachalam): The people in the villages of Bhadrachalam Constituency in Andhra Pradesh are facing a perpetual problem and that is acute shortage of drinking water. It is a predominantly tribal inhabited area and the tribal development and other programmes have not so far solved the problem.

As the area is in the coal-producing dry belt, tube-wells and other pumps would not help in producing drinking water for the people.

It would appear ironical that while a perennial river like the Godavari is flowing nearby, its water has not been brought to the water-scarce villages of Bhadrachalam Constituency.

I urge upon the Government to draw up urgently a scheme for this purpose and set apart necessary funds to solve the drinking water problem of the suffering people in the area.

SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL (Jabalpur): The telephone system in some towns of my constituency, Jabalpur and Katni has been very erratic since last three to four months. Recently the situation has turned from bad to worse and most of the telephones, remain dead most of the time. Press reports are rife that corruption is rampant in the

Department and there is a feeling among the people of Jabalpur that if the telephone is dead it does not necessarily mean that they are not being billed. The main culprits are the linesmen and the technical staff, who are working in collusion with the higher officials also.

The situation in rural Jabalpur is also the same and the telephones in remote areas are totally dead. The people and the Press have time and again demanded for a departmental inquiry. I also urge upon the Government to hold a departmental inquiry and set the situation right.

SHRI PALA K.M. MATHEW (Idukki): I rise to mention very briefly an urgent and very important matter which is agitating the minds of the people in South India, especially Kerala and more specially in the district of Idukki. The heavy downfall of tea prices is very disastrously affecting the small growers, especially of the Idukki district which alone employs more than 40,000 permanent and semi-permanent workmen. Except for a few estate owners, a vast majority are small growers. The crisis is so serious that these small farmers have stopped plucking the leaves because the cost of harvesting is higher than the price obtained by the sale of tea. The average price during the last three months has been Rs. 26 only, whereas the price during the corresponding period in the previous year was around Rs. 43. The cost of production comes to around Rs. 37. If the situation continues the big estates would declare a lay off and the small farmers would stop plucking leaves; they will be totally ruined. The failure of Russia and the other traditional importers of tea to purchase tea is the main cause for this drop in prices.

I want to request the Commerce Ministry to take immediate action on this in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry and also the Agriculture Ministry. One such step which the Commerce Ministry can take is to make arrangements for our debt payment in rupees by including it also in the list.

I would request the hon. Prime Minister also to intervene in this matter — because the matter is so serious — and give some direction to the Ministries of Industry, Commerce, External Affairs and Finance also.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV (Sahasra): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rail route, from Bakhtiyarpur to Bihariganj in Kosi division in Bihar was sanctioned by the then Railway Minister, Late Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra. This rail route leads to Madhepura and Purnia. This work is lying pending due to one or the other reason. I urge upon the Central Government to start this construction work immediately in the public interest.

[English]

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK (Phulbani): Sir, during the last Session this House unanimously resolved to support and show its wisdom, in the context of the seriousness and gravity of the situation that prevailed in my constituency, Phulwani on the eve of the communal fight. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs also gave a statement that he would cross check with the State Government about the reality of the situation and he would come up with a statement. As there is still every possibility and apprehension for the breach of peace in my area, my request is

that we should take sufficient care to safeguard the situation. I hope that a direction will come through you, Sir, to the Government to react to the demand of the entire House.

DR. VISWANATHAM KANITHI (Srikakulam): Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

Today is an important day in the annals of Indian history for being the Centenary Birth Day of Varahagiri Venkata Giri, the Fourth President of India who was born on 10th August, 1894 at Berhampur, the then undivided Madras State. He was born in a well-known family.

After completion of his studies, he went to England and finished his Bar-at-Law during 1914—16. In 1914 itself, he met Mahatma Gandhi and he was attracted to his ideals and programmes. He developed close contacts with labour leaders in England. He set up his practice at Madras in the High Court. He became a popular lawyer in a short time. He began to spare his time for the active politics. He partook in many movements and organised many meetings and demonstration against the British rule. He identified himself as the champion of the labour. He became a big figure when he headed an agitation against the Railways for their anti-labour laws. He represented India at the Round Table Conference in 1931 as the labour representative in England. He suffered prison terms and went underground many a time. He served the Cabinet of Rajaji and Prekam in Madras. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India and he served in the Cabinet of Jawahar Lal Nehru as Minister in Charge of Labour, Banking and Industry.

I urge upon the Central Government to make some arrangements to issue a commemorative stamp and also to unveil a portrait of this great leader in the Parliament, who fought for the cause of the labour.

SRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUÉ (Jorhat): Sir, there are rampant cancellations of Indian Airlines flights in the North-Eastern Region in spite of the assurances given by the Government.

On 6th August, 1994, three flights were cancelled, namely, IC-701, Calcutta-Dibrugarh; IC-711, Calcutta-Guwahati; and IC-743, Calcutta-Agartala. On the 7th August also IC-213, Calcutta-Jorhat flight was cancelled.

Incidentally, last week out of three scheduled flights a week between Calcutta-Jorhat, only one operated and two were cancelled. The reason of the present cancellation was attributed to the resignation of a few pilots. So, my question is: How is it that flight schedules in the rest of the country remain more or less unaffected and flights are cancelled only in the North-Eastern Region? It has been observed over the years that whenever there is a slight flutter in the normal schedule of the Indian Airlines, the first casualty is the North-Eastern Region and second in the hit list are the other not easily accessible areas like Ladakh etc.

Will the Government listen to the voice of reason particularly in a region where in many corners the language of alienation is sometimes heard?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now Papers to be laid on the Table.
(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): Sir, a very serious situation has arisen... (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Panigrahi, it is 12.30 now. It is for the early speakers to accommodate. Four-five names are left out. I could have called all the five names, but the early speakers dragged on their speeches. If they had cut short their speeches, all the four-five Members could have been accommodated. So, this is a lesson for the next day. The early speakers should try to accommodate their own brothers. I am guided by the clock. So, today you should excuse me.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Kindly be realistic, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please excuse me today.

Now Papers to be laid on the Table.

12.31 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Memorandum of understanding between the National Building Construction Corporation Ltd. and Ministry of Urban Development for 1994-95 etc.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:—

- (1) A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the National Building Construction