

[Shri Ismail Hossain Khan]

there is a section of people who always try to create communal tension and harass the innocent people. There is nobody to object to driving Bangladesh Nationals out of Indian soil. But it is seen several times that some innocent Indian citizens are unnecessarily harassed in the name of Bangladesh infiltration in this area. Therefore, I appeal to the hon. Minister to appoint a high powered committee to enquire into the voracity of the news items so that the innocent people are saved from unnecessary harassment and tension. Necessary directions may also be issued to the state government for a permanent solution of the river-erosion problems of the people of Assam, particularly of Barpeta sub-division.

(iii) SHARP SPURT IN MONEY SUPPLY IN CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT (Rajgarh): Under rule 377 I seek your permission to bring a matter of urgent public importance to the notice of this House. There is a sharp spurt in money supply in the first and second quarters of the current financial year showing an increase of 7.7 per cent. The increase of net R.B.I. credit to the government, the consequent deficit financing and the increase in the foreign exchange arrangements of the banking sector are the major components of this situation. Further huge amount of liquidity in private hands can set in motion a new amount of inflation through speculative buying. The steep rise in demand deposits with banks is a disturbing trend. Shortages in cement, steel, coal and soda ash have led to speculative buying and has further driven up the prices in an unwanted manner. It is, therefore, very essential for the government to review the entire situation and curb traders from disturbing the market trends.

(iv) REPORTED HARDSHIP OF SALT LABOURERS IN SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT OF GUJARAT DUE TO UNTIMELY RAINS

PROF. R. K. AMIN (Surendranagar): Under rule 377, I want to men-

tion the following matter. A great calamity has befallen on the Salt labourers known as agrias in the Surendranagar District of Gujarat State during the last 10 days due to unexpected, untimely rains amounting to 4 to 6 inches during 12th and 13th November, 1978, in the desert areas of salt production, known as Patri-Khura ghoda Zinzuwada area of Dasada Taluka and Kundra-Halvad area of Dharangadhra Taluka. This calamity was more severe due to floods which brought water from Banas and Rupen rivers which end in the desert of Kutch. This brought good deal of miseries both in terms of hunger, cold and diseases and also financial losses to labourers since the loss in terms of washing away of salt, damage to well and water channels and entire loss of household effects are to be borne by labourers.

Out of 12000 labourers, about 6 to 7 thousand labourers were stranded in the desert, they could not come out, they had to be fed by throwing food packets by helicopter. About 5000 families lost their total households—each having on an average, households worth Rs. 250 to Rs. 300/- and thereby the total damage amounting to about 12 to 15 lakhs of rupees. Moreover, in their salt fields, they lost salt, water channels, salt water well, etc. which loss also may be to the tune of Rs. 80 to 100 lakhs, thereby the total financial loss may be an order of Rs. 110 lakhs. Besides, about 5000 people had to undergo hunger, cold, deprivation etc. for about 10 days because from railway station at Kharadhods, the manufacturers of salt had to be away by about 30 KM due to the parapheri of the radium of 10 miles given to Hindustan Salt Limited, which does not produce salt, nor does it allow others to produce—acting as a dog in the manger policy. This mistake of Government's policy has been pointed out a number of times in the last 30 years and more so, the present Prime Minister, the Minister of Industry both at the Centre and also in the State have realised and accepted this fact of non-

justification of such a Parapheri given to Hindustan Salt Ltd. in this area which cause untold miseries to thousands of manufacturers of salt—most of them work on co-operative basis. It should be noted that the Hindustan Salt hardly produces salt of about 8 to 10 percent of the total salt production in this area. The aid given by the State Government is just meagre—not even 2 per cent of the total loss, incurred by labourers while, for the last several years, a special cess is being collected on salt from this area which remained almost unspent so far.

It is, therefore, urged on the Central Government that at once a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs be set apart to help the labourers to rehabilitate—both in terms of their settlement and also for their production. Immediately this monopoly of having parapheri be given up and small agarias and cooperative manufacturers be allowed to produce salt in the parapheri areas. And thirdly roads be built up with a view to provide a road connection and also 10 to 15 tubewells be constructed to provide drinking water in the entire area. This needs immediate action from Minister of Industry at the Centre; Salt Commissioner at Jaipur and the Government of Gujarat which looks after the immediate relief work.

(v) NEED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A BROAD GAUGE RAILWAY LINE FROM ERNAKULAM TO ALLEPPEY (KERALA)

SHRI V. M. SUDHEERAN (Alleppey): Sir, with your permission, under rule 377, I would like to invite the kind attention of this august House to the demand of the people of Kerala regarding the construction of a broad-gauge railway line from Ernakulam to Alleppey. We strongly feel that justice is not being done to the State in this matter.

Even though the proposal to construct a new broad-gauge railway line between Ernakulam and Alleppey has been under the consideration of the Railway Ministry and the Planning Commission since 1976, it is a matter

of deep regret to the people of Kerala that no final decision has been taken in this regard so far, because it grievously affects the industrial belt of Kerala, which is one of the most backward areas of the State.

The investment involved is extremely small, compared to the magnitude of the Railways Works Budget, it is only about Rs. 4.5 crores, and that is also spread over a period of three years, which is the time required for the construction of this line. The return from expected traffic is about 18.4 per cent, not taking into account the large volume of traffic expected from the new industries which are being set up in the region between Ernakulam and Alleppey subsequent to the preparation of this project report by the Southern Railways. If such additional traffic is also taken into account, the return will be about 21 per cent.

The Government of Kerala is in correspondence with the Planning Commission on the subject and it has also given all the clarifications. The people of Kerala are greatly disappointed that this new line was not included in the railway budget for 1978-79, in spite of the good return expected from that line. And in the light of the priority consideration given by the Government of India to employment oriented projects, I should like to emphasize the fact that with the early completion of the Ernakulam-Alleppey line and the early coming into existence in the public sector three industries, Alleppey would be offering jobs for 3,000 people, involving an investment of about Rs. 20 crores. Now the land for the setting up of the State sector industries has been acquired and collaboration agreements are being entered into, involving preliminary expenditure of considerable magnitude for the early setting up of these key industries. All this is being done in the firm hope that the Alleppey-Ernakulam railway line will become a reality in the immediate future, without which the functioning of these heavy