

[Sh. Uddhab Barman]

Motor Service Employees of North-Eastern Region. They are on strike since 15th November in protest against non-implementation of Government orders granting Special Duty Allowance to Central Government Employees of the North-Eastern Region in their case.

While the telecommunication department have decided to grant the said allowance as per Central Administrative Tribunal's orders, to their employees, but the Postal Department is not implementing the order in respect of their employees, viz. RMS, Postal and the Mail Motor Service. Though Postal and Telecom Departments are under the control of the same Ministry, the Postal employees are being unreasonably deprived of the allowance. This is against all canons of natural justice. This has led to strike by employees which is causing tremendous inconvenience to the people of North-Eastern Region as well as to the people of other parts of the country.

I urge upon the Government to intervene and ensure that postal employees of NE Region are given their legitimate dues and the unfortunate strike is called off.

- (viii) **Need to revitalise India's Power Sector and ensure continued funding of Farakka Project in West Bengal by World Bank and Asian Development Bank.**

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): Sir, I want to bring the following matter under Rule 377.

Due to unprecedented financial crunch, the West Bengal Government has resorted to unannounced cuts in plan expenditure which has virtually affected all the public utility services. The West Bengal State have received only about 27.5 per cent on an

average of the funds earmarked for them under the 'Rs. 1,733.39 crore' State Plan Outlay.

The Asian Development Bank which had agreed to fund the Farakka Thermal Power Project of the NTPC estimated to cost \$ 375 million has now reportedly withheld funding for the project after severely criticising the poor performance of India's power sector. Both the A.D.B. and the World Bank have urged the need for revitalising and re-energising the power sector. I urge upon the Government to initiate necessary reforms in this sector and ensure that the funding by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for the Farakka Project is not withheld and the project is undertaken vigorously and completed in time.

- (viii) **Need to confer ownership rights of forest land to Scheduled Tribes in Gujarat**

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDUBHAI DESHMUKH (Bharuch): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, thousands of tribals in Gujarat have forest land under their occupation since 1940. But they have not been given the ownership rights of that land, even though they have toiled hard to make that land fertile and increased the crop production. The State Government had promised to give ownership rights to those tribals. In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, a policy was formulated to give ownership rights for the forest land which was trespassed up to 1970. In Gujarat this policy has been formulated to to 1967. But it is not being implemented properly due to which the tribals are not getting proper benefits from the Government schemes.

Therefore, I would request the Government to confer ownership rights of forest land on the tribals by relaxing the provisions of the Forest Act.