

## **Regarding blockade of National Highway in Manipur**

**DR. ANGOMCHA BIMOL AKOIJAM (INNER MANIPUR):** Hon. Chairperson, Madam, I want to draw the attention of the House to something which the hon. Finance Minister had also mentioned on this floor, that is, the blockage of national highways, particularly National Highway 2 and National Highway 37. This State in our country has been the site of illegal taxation by all kinds of armed groups for many years. A cement bag, which is available for Rs.300 or Rs.350 barely 200 kilometres away in Dimapur, is sold in Imphal at around Rs.700 or Rs.800. It has affected the economy and it has been a decades-old problem. But things have become serious with the ongoing crisis. Some people are holding the citizens of the State to ransom in the name of separate administration. They have been trying to obstruct the free movement of population on these highways. They have also resisted the idea of resettlement of people in their original homes. This has been going on from day one.

I would like to draw the attention of this House to the people suffering because of this. It has a tacit support of the Government. It seems that you have been partitioning people on communal lines. People in Churachandpur are travelling more than 300 kilometres to board a flight from Aizawl rather than going to Imphal which is barely 50 kilometres. People from Imphal cannot afford a flight. All of them have been using flights to go to Guwahati or Kolkata. This inconvenience has been going on. I would appreciate the move of the Governor to open these highways. But it seems that he has buckled under pressure from these communal forces which are positioning the so-called separate administration as an issue to justify this deprivation of basic human rights of citizens, that is, the right to free movement under Article 19 and the right to life which also includes right to livelihood, that is, Article 21. The Government must take firm action to clear these roads and allow free movement of citizens in the State.