

(iii) Need to provide relief to victims of hailstorms in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA (Valshali) : Several parts of Muzaffarpur district have been affected by hailstorm of February 23 which damaged the entire cultivation in the area. The worst affected villages are of Chitri, Jalapur, Madhopur, Shujwalpur, Nersa Gopalpur and Rajarampur of Dokda Panchayat and villages of Bihawara Panchayat. Tobacco, wheat, makkha, todi and other cash-crops had been so severely damaged that for the whole year the villagers would have to face the problem of finding a livelihood. The damage by hailstorm, it may be recalled, came on top of the destruction caused by the floods during last monsoon. No grain is left in the fields. The rabi crop had been grown with help of loans and fertiliser seeds etc. obtained on credit, from which three per cent. was deducted as insurance premium. I request that immediate steps be taken to bring relief to these villagers and to compensate them suitably for the loss.

[Translation]

(iv) Need to give Saka Samvat the same importance as given to the Gregorian Calendar

SHRI NIRMAL KHATTTRI (Falzabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the august House that the Saka Samvat calendar is not being given due importance. It is unfortunate that gregorian calendar is being preferred over the Saka Samvat calendar.

While on the one hand the Central Government constituted a committee and gave its approval to the Saka Samvat calendar and directed the Central and State Government offices to use it in their correspondences, on the other hand all the programmes and holidays are fixed keeping in view the gregorian calendar and not the Saka Samvat Calendar, which is not proper. The use of Saka Samvat has become a formality and is limited to Central Government letters and Gazette notifications only.

In this connection, I would like to request the Central Government to declare the first day of Saka Samvat (Chaitra 1, Saka 1911) a national holiday. Cultural programmes should be held and Doordarshan and AIR should broadcast special programmes to greet the new year every year.

[English]

(v) Need for allocation of sufficient funds for Modernisation of Sone Canal Project.

PROF. K. K. TEWARY (Buxar) : I draw the attention of the Central Government to the resentment prevailing among the farmers of the south central Bihar due to the uncertainty and delay in the implementation of the Sone Canal modernisation project. The entire agricultural economy of this area is solely dependent on this canal system. The decade-old socio-agrarian unrest in the part of Bihar is spearheaded by Naxalites and other associated groups who have taken maximum advantage of the utter backwardness of the region and the prevailing frustration among the rural youth. This traditional granary has hope of survival only if the Sone Canal system is modernised.

Various irrigation projects in Madhya Pradesh and U. P. leave very little water in river Sone as Bihar's share. With the Canal system in total disarray due to lack of timely repairs and very meagre volume of water now available, it would be just impossible to meet the original commitments of irrigation.

It was in view of this situation that the modernisation project was to be taken up and completed during the 7th Plan with the World Bank assistance. All formalities like surveys, estimates and funding patterns have also been worked out by competent authorities. It is unfortunate that this project which has been accorded top priority both by Central and State Governments has not been taken up so far.

In the interest of the socio-economic and socio-political stability of this volatile