

dom-fighters is like showing respect to the country. These high ideals were brought to reality by our late *Rashtramata* Shrimati Indira Gandhi, and the present Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi is following her footsteps. As a result of this, the pension of freedom-fighters was raised from Rs. 300 per month to Rs. 500 per month, which is commendable. Besides, they were provided free rail pass facility but the freedom-fighters do not seem to be satisfied with it. I am therefore, of the opinion that all the freedom-fighters in the country should be provided "cheque pass" facility which is also listed in their charter of demands.

[English]

- (vii) Extension or broadgauge line to Dibrugarh by diverting the Railway route from Guwahati and Dibrugarh in Assam.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Jorhat) : The Railway route in Assam remains more or less in the outdated British Government system of excluding the common people in the heartland from readily benefiting from the Railway services and limiting these to serve their own trade interests in tea and coal. Most of the District and Sub-Divisional Headquarters, towns like Nagaon, Morigaon, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar and Sonari as also commercially important and populous rural localities like Raha, Dergaon, Jharji, Gaurisagar, Moran etc. on the south bank of Bramaputra and Mangaldoi, Dehkiajuli, Tezpur, Sootea, Narayanpur and North Lakhimpur on the North Bank remained untouched by the Railway main lines. Most of Goalpara and Dhubri Districts in the Assam Valley, let alone the hilly regions, remain cut off from the Railway main line. In short, Assam and for that matter, most people of North Eastern India feel neglected in the matter of the vital means of transportation which besides providing general benefits, contributes in no small measure towards strengthening the process of integration and understanding. This neglect is evident from the absence of a single extension project in the North Eastern region in the Seventh Plan.

I, therefore, urge upon the Transport (Railways) Ministry to undertake initially at least one project of extending the BG line to Dibrugarh by diverting the Railway route from Guwahati so as to touch Raha, Nagaon, Dergaon, Golaghat, Jorhat, Jharji Sibsagar, Moran, etc. and then from Dibrugarh to the coal and oil areas of Digboi, Margherita, Ledo via Tinsukia whereby Railway lines with parts of Arunachal Pradesh would also be opened up.

- (viii) Need to take measures to return Gilgit manuscripts to the Srinagar Museum

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla) : It was in 1931 that some manuscripts were found in Gilgit which were declared to be of immense historical and archeological value. These manuscripts, later referred to as Gilgit manuscripts, pertained to very ancient culture, particularly to Buddhist Lore. The then Maharaja of Kashmir brought these invaluable manuscripts to Kashmir. A high ranking German team of experts found that these manuscripts were as much important as the 'Dead Sea Scrolls'.

In 1947, these manuscripts were shifted to National Museum, Delhi for the fear that the same might get lost or damaged due to bombing that was apprehended from Pakistan. It is now 39 years since when these manuscripts were temporarily shifted from the Jammu and Kashmir State Museum to Delhi. The then Chief Minister, Janab Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah wrote to the Minister concerned in 1979 for return of these manuscripts but to no avail.

I urge the Government of India to take measures to return these manuscripts to Srinagar museum restoring its individuality and uniqueness which will, otherwise be impaired.