

principle to do away with sales tax and octroi tax all over the country. But because of opposition from the States and the urban bodies for their loss of income the same has not yet been implemented. These taxes are responsible to push prices of several commodities higher. Uniformity in prices at different places is also not possible due to variation in tax percentage. Further, administration of these taxes also gives rise to corruption.

It is, therefore, imperative that objections of States and urban bodies should be suitably disposed of through negotiations on alternative sources of their income and these two taxes need to be abolished forthwith.

[*Translation*]

**(ii) Need to allocate separate funds to tackle the water scarcity problem in hilly regions of Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is every likelihood that unprecedented drinking water problems may hit the hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh this summer. Due to lack of rains this year, new springs of water have not shot up and the water of the old springs has already started drying up. There is a strong feeling that by the end of this year or by the beginning of next year, drinking water will not be available in 60 percent villages of these areas.

Most of the drinking water schemes formulated with the help of financial institutions like World Bank etc. in these areas are not functioning or will stop functioning near future owing to mishandling.

River or local water springs are the only sources of water in these areas. There is no possibility of availability of underground water also in these areas.

Therefore, there is a need to look and understand the drinking water crisis in these areas in district manner. The Central Government should make a list of villages struck by the problem of drinking water and start work after preparing a strategy with regard to water supply in order to solve this problem. The Central Government should earmark sufficient economic assistance for these areas for the purpose.

**(iii) Demand for conversion of Shahganj-Ballia MG Railway line into broad gauge line**

SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI (Ghosi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the government to the districts of Uttar Pradesh viz., Azamgarh, Maunath Bhanjan, Ballia and Gajipur where world famous goods are produced and thousands of people of the aforesaid and other nearby districts visit these places. Various goods are sent out from here but due to the lack of transport facilities a lot of problems have to be faced in movement of these goods and the people. The manufactured goods, if not sent outside have a direct effect on their demand and in the absence of proper resources and the broad gauge line, the project to install the thermal power project in Dohrighat is hanging in the balance. If means of transport were made available here, then the manufactured goods could surely be sent to far-off places and their demand would have increased day by day and by the installation of thermal power in Dohrighat, Bihar, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Ballia, Gajipur, Dewria, Basti and other districts would have got power, thus enabling to set up industries in these areas.

Therefore, I request the hon. Minister of Railways to take immediate action in order to convert the Mamath Bhanjan, Dohrighat, Ballia line from Shahganj into broad gauge line for the development of manufactured goods of this area, for industrial growth and