

[Shri Virdhi Chander Jain]

scheme introduced by the Central Government is in force in those remote hilly areas which are inaccessible and where industrialists find it difficult to set up industries.

The Ministry of Industry has granted subsidy upto 50 per cent under that Scheme which was increased to 75 per cent in April, 1983 because the cost of transportation of goods had increased.

12.09 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH *in the Chair*]

The Central Transport Subsidy Scheme is restricted to only the hilly areas and is not in force in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts where the train services are inadequate and also in the remote areas which are difficult to reach.

The Central Government have declared Barmer and Jaisalmer districts as 'no industry districts'. There are large deposits of limestone, batonite, yellow stone, gypsum, rock phosphate, clay etc., in those areas but like hilly areas, it is very difficult to reach those remote areas.

The Central Government have provided cent per cent assistance for the development of the desert areas in the same way as it has done in the case of the development of hilly areas.

I would, therefore, strongly urge the Government to provide 75 per cent transport subsidy for the desert areas, as is provided for the hilly areas, particularly in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts of the Thar Desert, the remote areas which are difficult to reach and thereby encourage small entrepreneurs to set up industries there so that this backward and border area could develop.

[*Translation*]

(iii) Need to reduce the average purchase of opium from the growers from 32 kg. to 27 kg. in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH (Guna) :  
Mr. Chairman, Sir, about ten thousand

opium cultivators of Mandsaur and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh and Chittorgarh and Jhalawat districts of Rajasthan have been issued notices for the cancellation of their licences whereas assurance was given to them that reduction in the average quantum of procurement would be sympathetically considered in view of the damage caused to opium crop by hailstorm last year. The average production of opium has fallen by two to three per cent in comparison with the average production of 1985 due to the damage caused by hailstorm. It is, therefore, requested that the average quantum of opium to be procured from the opium growers in 1986 be proportionately reduced from 32 kg. to 27 kg. This demand of the farmers should be considered sympathetically because their crop of opium has been severely hit due to the natural calamity and hailstorm.

[*English*]

(iv) Demand for streamlining the Haj affairs and for arranging direct flights from Srinagar to Jeddah

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla):  
The performance of Haj by Indian pilgrim needs to be streamlined. As of now, Indian pilgrims face several odds while in Saudi Arabia. They have difficulties in respect of accommodation, medical aid, in matters relating to their identification, transport and selection of guides. The entire process requires close scrutiny and reforms as the snags in the present arrangements bring bad name to the country. The Ministry of External Affairs should involve itself more closely with the Haj affairs and strengthen, through funds and facilities its embassy at Riyadh and Consulate General at Jeddah. The Ministry should also go into the functioning of the Haj Committee against which several allegations have been levelled by several quarters. The Haj Committee should be made broad-based by drawing members from all States, especially from Jammu & Kashmir which is a Muslim majority State. Since most of the pilgrims fly

directly from Delhi, Government should construct Mussafirkhanas at Delhi.

The Government should also arrange direct flights from Srinagar to Jeddah for the pilgrims of Kashmir from the next year. I urge that all these reformative measures may be taken in right earnest.

**(v) Demand for S.T.D. facilities in Pathanamthitta district in Kerala**

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Pathanamthitta is the only district in Kerala which does not have STD facilities. This district was formed a few years back but it has not so far been put on the STD network. Although the microwave station has been completed, due to non-availability of some vital equipment, it could not be commissioned.

This district contributes substantially to the economy of the country with its cash crops like rubber, pepper, cardamom, etc. With the largest number of schools, colleges and technical institutions, it has the highest literacy rate in the State. Perhaps the largest number of people from a single district working in the Gulf countries are also from Pathanamthitta. In the absence of STD facilities, the growing needs of faster communication cannot be met. This has affected the development of this district.

I would, therefore, request the Minister of Communications to direct the concerned authorities to immediately supply the equipment needed and introduce STD in Pathanamthitta at the earliest.

**(vi) Need to exempt international awards and prizes won by our artists/sportsmen from customs duty**

SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD (Baroda) : India with its rich culture and heritage has produced some of the finest artists in the world in the field of visual arts such as sculpture, painting, graphics and photography. Most of these artists who have won international awards are from a humble background. Due to the prohibitive cost of art aids and materials

they find it difficult to fully meet their art needs even in India. Hence when they receive international awards and prizes, they are unable to bring them home because of the customs regulations of the Government. For example, a well known photographer having won a camera as price in an international photography exhibition has been unable to bring it into the country as he is unable to pay the customs duty which runs into thousands of rupees. We seem to have overlooked the fact that whenever any of the countrymen get an international award it is also a recognition for our country. So far only a handful of sportsmen have been allowed to bring in their awards without paying customs duty.

Therefore, I request the Government to look into the matter in this perspective and show them appreciation and acknowledgement by declaring these international awards and prizes won by artists as non-dutiable commodities. This will go a long way in encouraging arts and sports in the country. It will further boost morale of our young artists and sportsmen who need every support and encouragement to reach the highest potential of their talent.

[Translation]

**(vii) Need to improve Telephone services in Varanasi region of Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI ZAINUL BASHER (Ghazipur) : There has been continuous deterioration in the telephone services in the Varanasi region of eastern Uttar Pradesh. In an important city like Varanasi, 40 to 50 per cent telephones remain out of order daily. The situation of telephone services in Ghazipur, Ballia, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Mau and Bhadohi cities near Varanasi is even more pitiable. In the villages, the telephones remain out of order for days and even for months together. The trunk service in Varanasi is very inefficient. Although one can get telephone connection for big cities from Varanasi but it is very difficult to get telephone connection from there for small towns located nearby. The trunk exchange of Varanasi plays an