

[Shri P. K. Kadiyan]

she had committed suicide. Attempts are made to hush up the case.

Sir, this is the fifth incident in which a nurse has died in suspicious circumstances in this district. Earlier, four nurses had met with their end in similar circumstances. All these deaths have taken place within the last few months especially after the present CMO had taken charge of the Centre.

On December 6th, 200 nurses posted in 15 primary health centres in the district took out a procession in Pratapgarh, demanding CID inquiry into the death of the nurse and punishment of the culprits.

The nurses working in the district, who have come from far away Kerala, are feeling insecure. It is a known fact that an organised gang has been working around the hospitals and primary health centres in the area, who have become a threat to the nurses and girls working there.

I request the Central Government to take immediate steps to institute a proper inquiry into the death of the nurse and bring the culprits to book as early as possible and to ensure security to life and honour of nurses, who are working in Pratapgarh district and other areas in Uttar Pradesh.

(ix) PEST INFECTION OF WHEAT CROP IN NORTHERN BELT OF MADHYA PRADESH.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT (Rajgarh): An alarming situation is facing the farmers under the wheat production belt. The virus deadly disease, called "Karnal Bunt", has widely affected wheat crops in the northern belt of Madhya Pradesh. The percentage of incidence during this season is over 40 per cent. This has disturbed the agriculturists who stand to suffer heavy losses.

This disease has also spread to other 8 to 9 States, particularly Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and parts of Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi. There is a fear that widespread loss of wheat crop will gravely endanger the agricultural economy.

A minor disease till 1968, this virus of "Karnal Bunt" has increasingly spread to almost the whole wheat zone in the country. Even the agricultural scientists are looking helpless and alarmed at the first increasing percentage of this disease in the country. In the last decade the incidence was only upto 30 to 35 per cent. But this year it appears to be more by 10 to 15 per cent. The sad part of this sordid incidence of "Karnal Bunt" is that the crop becomes unfit for human consumption. Further, the disease causes a foul smell, like that of a rotten fish, which spreads to the entire crop, making it unacceptable for milling or whole meal. The disease is two-pronged, being initially soil-borne and also air-borne.

It is indeed beyond imagination that the Government has done precious little to contain this disease and to educate the farmers on weedicide and pesticide method. Since the last ten years the interests of wheat farmers are being neglected. Government must act positively and quickly. This issue has now become a national cause of worry. The scientists of the Indian Agriculture Research Institute must act on a war-footing. The suffering wheat producing farmers must be given subsidy and assistance to fight this disease. If this is not done, this vital crop will suffer badly.

I call upon the Government to immediately appoint an Expert to assess the spread of this disease and to invent methods to contain it, giving it wide publicity and demonstrations. Unless something is done

on a war footing, the crisis would deepen and wipe out the wheat source, together with the small wheat farmers.

14.25 hrs.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND BILL

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
(SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN):
Sir, I beg to move:*

"That the Bill to implement the African Development Fund Agreement and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

Hon. Members are aware of our long and close political and economic association with the developing countries of Africa. To show our solidarity with the aspiration of the developing African countries we have, within our limited resources, been giving them assistance and co-operation in areas where the Indian experience is of relevance to them. In order to further strengthen these links, it is necessary to supplement bilateral relationship by association through a multilateral framework. Such an approach would help to develop our contact with all the African countries to the fullest extent possible.

A possible way for achieving this was for India to join the premier multi-lateral development institution of Africa, namely, the African Development Bank and Fund. The African Development Bank and Fund is an institution set up on the same lines and principles as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Its main objective is to help further the economic and social development

of the member countries by providing financial assistance in the shape of low interest loans. The Organisation has two separate entities namely the Bank, which gives loans at a some what higher rate of interest to the more development members and the Fund, which is its soft loan window, similar to IDA. At present India has only become a member of the African Development Fund. We intend in the future, to also join the African Development Bank itself but there are some organisational changes which have to be made by the Bank before non-regional countries can be considered for membership. There are no such regional and non-regional criteria in respect of membership of the Fund.

A good example of economic co-operation between developing countries is through the strengthening of trade ties between them. It is our view that Indian merchandise and technology would be particular interest to the African countries at their present stage of development. Indian equipment in the field of power generation, water supply, transport systems, sugar plants, cement plants and technical expertise in the field of irrigation, water management geo-surveys, etc. are competitively priced and are appreciated by African buyers. However, for projects financed by the African Development Fund non-members of the Bank/Fund group are not permitted to tender for the procurement of goods and services required for the projects. If therefore we are to increase our participation in Africa's development and expand our trade relationship, it is necessary that we contribute to the African Development Fund and become its Member.

We have had several rounds of negotiations with the management of the Fund. On the basis of these negotiations, our delegation signed the African Development Fund

*Moved with recommendation of the President.