

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: These days we are trying to sort out our economic problems also by negotiating with the IMF, etc. Very often, issues of this kind are also linked up with them. This may be right or this may be wrong, I do not know. So, these misgivings can be set at rest only by sharing with the House. the thinking of the Government in this regard. So far as I feel, this is a matter which should not in any way be linked up with our economic problems. It should be decided on its own. If there are certain lobbies which are interested in forcing us to sign this particular document, we should stay away from it. Therefore, my demand would be this. Let the Government share with the House as to what is its thinking in this regard before going to participate in that. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: Sir, what about the issue raised by Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya and what is the reaction of the Government? The Government must say something. The Opposition is already unanimous on this point. Whatever the Government does, they must bring it to the House. The House should know what the government is thinking on this point.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Why the leader of the House is so unresponsive today? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LOKNATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): The silence of the Government only shows that they have already agreed to this. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the government to the serious situation arising out of the decision of the Government to privatise or close down some of the public sector units on the plea that they are sick. Over the years, since nationalisation, most of these public sector units were taken over

from the private sector for modernisation, diversification and expansion, but nothing has been done. In West Bengal, Sen-Raleigh - now Cycle Corporation of India - MAMC, BOGL, seven refractory units under Burn Standard, and fertiliser units are on the verge of closure. IISCO's future is uncertain. The modernisation programme is yet to come from the Government's side. Even Coal India is facing a bleak future. While private sector is demanding coal-bearing land, privatisation of power generation is promoting privatisation of coal mines. ECL has already notified closure of 32 mines in Raniganj.

I would request the Government to give up this privatisation and closure move and try to improve the functioning of the public sector units by modernisation, expansion, diversification, etc. It is high time that the Government should abandon the privatisation and closure more. Otherwise, workers of the closed public sector units will resist the Government's move and the situation will be worse. The Government must have realised the gravity of the situation after the 29th November, one-day industrial strike. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have called the name of Shri Anna Joshi, Let him speak.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANNA JOSHI (Pune): Sir, Maharashtra State has been facing severe drought condition this year. The Government has fixed a quota of rice to be levied on the rice-mill owners. It is increasingly becoming difficult to fulfil the stipulated quota. Government authorities and revenue officials are pressing hard to extract levy from rice-mill owners. Drought has already brought down the yields and paddy cultivation which is limited only to three or four districts of Konkan and Bhandara in Vidarbha. Further, the price extended by Government for such levy is half that of market price.

It is totally irrational, illogical and absurd to levy on rice-mill owners. It should either be charged on manufacturers or end-sellers in the market. Rice-mill owners only process the paddy. They do not have right over anything except the service charges.

Government should intervene immediately and send a team of experts to assess the situation and stop harassment of rice-mill owners by the revenue authorities. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, thousands of passport applications are pending in Cochin and Calicut Regional Passport Offices. The passport officials are creating unnecessary delay. They are harassing the people. One of the major problems being faced by these two passport offices is lack of staff.

We cannot provide employment to the people in our country. Let these young people go to other countries and seek jobs there. We have to allow them. There is unnecessary delay and red-tapism. Passport applicants are being harassed by these officials. So many times, we have brought this matter to the notice of the Government as well as the Minister. But no action has been taken. This is very urgent. Now that the situation in Kuwait is normal, people are going back to Kuwait. They want to renew their passports and they want to get new passports. Because of the unnecessary delay in the passport Offices, these young people and job-seekers are suffering a lot. Recently, the Minister has also assured that a new Regional passport Office will be opened in Trivandrum. Five months are already over, but no action has been taken till now. My humble request to the Government is that they should take immediate action to expedite issuing of passports. They should also conduct an inquiry into the present affairs of

the Passport Offices at Cochin and Calicut (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Brishin Patel please.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL (Siwan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, during 1990-91, the Bihar State Sugar Corporations siwan Unit supplied ten thousand bags of sugar to the Department of Delhi Administration responsible sale of sugar last an any my Inspector declared all ten thousand lags of sugar unfit for human consumption. As a result of it, the Food Corporation of India has stopped lifting the quota of sugar, from there. It seems that this Inspector, as he was not entertained properly, has taken this stand which is contrary to the interest of the people and all those ten thousand bags are laying there. As a result the workers are starving. I, therefore, urge the Government to send to Siwan a Senior Officer of Delhi civil Supplies Department to carry uot of fresh test so that the truth may be found out.

SHRI RAMSAGAR (Barabanki) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India and the leader of the House to a political prisoner.

Sir, Shri Vishambhar Singh an M.L.A is kept in Fatehpur jail. He is a patient of cancer and his condition has deteriorated too much. The district Magistrate and the jailor have written to the Uttar Pradesh Government to release him but the Uttar Pradesh Government is adopting a indicative attitude and that is why it is not releasing him. Be it Shri Vishambhar Singh, Madan Bhalya or Shri D.P. Yadav, all these M.L.As. are not being released due o political retribution.

Sir, Shri Jal Prakash Narayan and Gandhiji were also political prisoners and