

the legal battle has been going on. They have been pushed to this extreme of strike as a result of which the people there, are suffering. When postal services crumble in this manner of becoming paralysed, the people are also suffering.

Therefore, I would appeal to the Government and the Minister of Communications in particular, that let him realise that the telecommunication employees have been compelled to pay because of the Court Judgement. Why should these people be denied and why should they be forced to take recourse to a strike?

Therefore, immediately, this matter should be taken up. Their very legitimate demands should also be treated at par with other employees. They should also be paid the Special duty Allowance.

[*Translation*]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur): I would like to add to it that the Special leave petition filed by the Government should be withdrawn. They, therefore, should hold negotiations.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat). Sir, a very important issue has been raised by Shri Somnath Chatterjee. The issue relates to the increase of prices. It was said during the Budget discussion, that the price increase was of a temporary nature and it is also of a seasonal character. I think, even several months after the Budget, the increase in prices continues unabated.

The Prime Minister is on record to say that special arrangements are being made for strengthening and expanding the Public Distribution System. Instead of further ex-

panding the Public Distribution System, the requisite amount of foodstuffs, kerosene oil and other essential commodities which are supplied through the Public Distribution System are not being supplied to the State Governments. In the list of the State Governments, I include the Governments of Kerala, Tripura, West Bengal and almost all the State Governments who run the Public Distribution System in any way. So, the price increase has not been halted. This price increase is due to the faulty economic policy of the Government of India. It is because the Government of India has accepted that policy at the behest of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to allow the monopolists and the multi-national corporations to plunder our country.

Therefore, I want that the Government should make a statement and you should also allow a discussion on the price situation in the country which has gone beyond limits.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE (Aurangabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through this House I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Communications to the telephone system at Aurangabad (Maharashtra). The equipments which have been procured from I.T.I. Rai Bareilly last year for the expansion of telephone exchange in Aurangabad are of inferior quality in comparison to those manufactured in I.T.I., Bangalore. As a result of it, I think, Telephone services in Aurangabad would not be improved even after its expansion. The Department which takes the policy decision in regard to installation of telephone exchanges has not yet sanctioned. The Exchange of 5000 telephone lines for Aurangabad.

Similarly, an exchange having 600 lines is going to be installed in Chikaldhana city of this district in which all equipments removed from Jalna are being used. I urge upon the

Government to install a modern telephone exchange with a capacity of 1400 lines in view of the industrial position of Chikaldhana.

Sir, similarly, I demand that 30 channels should be provided to Valooz and Jaikvadi from the 120 channels Microwave digital System which is being installed between Aurangabad and Beed because the M.I.D.C. Industrial area of Valooz and Jaikvadi is very important.

*[English]*

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri): Mr. Deputy Speaker, May I just invite the attention of the Government through you and also through the House to a new phenomenon now being experienced by our passengers at the Santa Cruz Airport. Many of the passengers are being robbed of their valuables by the Security personnel and those who are coming from the Gulf countries have been complaining that their valuables are robbed of by the Security Staff while their luggage is being processed through X-ray. The luggage is x-rayed at the Santa Cruz.

On the 30th of November there was an incident for which myself and another hon. Member of this House, Mr. K. Muralee Dharan are witnesses. We were on board the flight from Bombay to Calicut. And one passenger came on board he was coming from Saudi Arabia - and complained that some of his money had been taken away by the Security staff while his luggage was being x-rayed. The Commander of that aircraft, Capt. Manchanda came down and took him to the security Staff. And he was returned 100, Saudi riyals which had been taken away from him by the Security Staff. This is now continuing and increasing. I would urge the Government to stop forthwith this harassment of the bonafide passengers and also take action against the delinquent officers.

*[Translation]*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to invite the attention of the House to a very important issue. As I have also given a notice for it formed. The prices of all the essential commodities are continuously increasing. During the budget session, the Finance Minister had assured the whole nation that the prices of essential commodities will decline or start declining after the month of October. But according to the figures available here, inflation has increased 7 per cent between October and November and the prices of all the essential commodities have increased by 4 per cent. During the last six months prices of life saving drugs have increased by 2.5 times to 3 times. The prices of text books and exercise books for children have increased nearly by 1.5 times during the last six months.

Sir, the Government is inefficient, prices of essential commodities are continuous on the rise. Despite the fact that the Kharif crops have reached the market, the prices of foodgrains are constantly increasing. The Public Distribution System of the Government has virtually collapsed. The Government has completely failed to provide essential items to the people. I, therefore, would like that a discussion should be held in the House regarding the availability of essential commodities to the people and the price rise. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a discussion is going on over such an important issue and the entire House is empty. Please call them inside the House. As assurance was given to bring down the prices of commodities within hundred days. It should be discussed in the House. Such an important issue is being discussed here, but Members belonging to the treasury benches are not present at all. I request you to call them inside. *(Interruptions)*