

The question is:

"That the Members of Rajya Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which she has been pleased to deliver to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together on February 25, 2008."

The motion is adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up Special Mentions.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Demand to declare underground fire in Jharia Coal Field a National Disaster

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I draw the special attention of the House towards the situation prevailing in 600 square kilometres of Jharia Coal Field area affecting 7 lakh people in Jharkhand and Raniganj Coalfield area in West Bengal due to underground fire having serious social, economic, infrastructural and environmental consequences.

Recently, I visited several places of Jharia fire affected area and seen men, women and children living in area where poisonous gas is emitting, subsidence is taking place and underground fire coming out. Several railway tracks are under threat. Railway line and station through Jharia have already been closed. The RSP College in Jharia with its 6000 students and Jharia's Central Water Supply in 'Zone-1', according to the report of the Central Mining Research Institute, is under serious threat stating 'the rate of progress of fire in zone-1 is in the range of 8-3 metre per month'.

Presently, the matter is being handled by the Coal Ministry through Coal PSUs, ECL and BCCL as operating agencies. The lackadaisical approach of Coal Ministry can be seen in the notice issued by BCCL to Jharia College to shift from its present location as they 'deem fit'. Thus, lakhs of affected people have become victims on both counts.

I urge the Central Government to consider such a disaster as a national disaster and act accordingly before a huge tragedy occurs. I request the Prime Minister to personally intervene to ensure formation of co-ordinating bodies of all concerned Union Ministries and Stated Governments aiming at protecting lives and livelihood of all sections of affected people, environment and areas by controlling underground fire as far as possible and wherever required, resettlement and rehabilitation of all sections of affected people. Thank you.

Request to continue the CGHS facilities to accredited Journalists and their Families

श्री अली अनवर (बिहार): महोदय, केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा पी0आई0बी0 से मान्यता प्राप्त पत्रकारों को सी0जी0 एच0 एस0 की सुविधा काफी पहले से दी जाती रही है। इस सुविधा की शुरुआत स्व0 प्रधान मंत्री श्री राजीव गांधी जी ने की थी, जिसके तहत वरिष्ठ पत्रकारों एवं उनके परिवार के लोगों को स्वास्थ्य- सुविधा दी गई थी। लेकिन यह अत्यंत खेद की बात है कि उनसे यह सुविधा छीनी जा रही है। विगत अप्रैल से उनके कार्ड का नवीनीकरण नहीं किया जा रहा है। दुःख की बात तो यह है कि जिन राजीव गांधी जी ने इस योजना का आरम्भ किया था, आज उन्हीं के दल की सरकार पत्रकारों से इस सुविधा को छीन रही है। इसमें विरोधाभास तो यह है कि संसदीय प्रश्न के उत्तर में सरकार एक ओर तो यह कह रही है कि यह सुविधा वापस नहीं ली गई है, जबकि दूसरी ओर उनके कार्ड का नवीनीकरण बंद कर दिया गया है। जितने पत्रकार