

lodge a strong protest with him against this occurrence and impress upon him, that in future, we will not tolerate such things. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has also stated that the killing of fishermen could no longer be tolerated only to maintain good relations between India and Sri Lanka. That is why I request the Government of India to take note of my suggestion. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has announced a relief of Rs. one lakh each to the families of the fishermen who were killed in the incident. I would also request the Government of India to grant similar relief to the affected families. The fishermen in Nagapattinam have launched an indefinite strike. They have been protesting against the killing of three fishermen. They want an assurance from the Government of India that such things will not take place in future. I request the Government of India to give such an assurance to them. I urge upon the Central Government to take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. Thank you very much.

Retrenchment of Workers in Bharat Gold Mines Ltd.

SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY (Karnataka): Sir, I thank you very much for having given me the opportunity to speak for the first time in this august House. I wish to raise the issue of the Bharat Goldmines Limited. Sir, I wish to raise the issue of Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., which is a Government of India undertaking, in Karnataka State. The Government of India had taken a decision to close it down and it had given the employees the deadline of 31.3.2000 to take voluntary retirement from service. But now I have heard that the deadline is extended up to 16.5.2000.

Sir, this has become a burning issue in some parts of Karnataka, specially, in Kolar and Bangalore Districts. Now, it is being highlighted in the newspapers for the last 15 days. I would just like to quote some headlines from **The Hindu**. On 5th April, there was a big headline "Centre is urged to grant funds to BGML". On 6th April, the headline was "BGML management is misleading the miners". This statement has been given by a BJP man. On 8th April, it was "A crucial meeting to discuss the future of BGML today". On 10th April, it was "BGML: Kolar MP takes a delegation to the Prime Minister". On 13th April, it was "BGML MD broke promise of retirement scheme". On 14th April, it was "Provide better VRS for BGML wokers". On 19th April, it was "Resolution against BGML closure suggested". On 24th April, it was "BGML repeats its plea". On 26th

April, it was "The Chief Minister to meet the Prime Minister on BGML issue". Finally, on 27th April, it was "Rehabilitation scheme for BGML workers suffers, Government neglect".

Sir, this gold mine is 120 years old and it was started by John Taylor and Company of England; for 70 years, it had served the British Government, and for the past 50 years, it has been serving the Government of India. Tonnes and tonnes of gold have been extracted for the Government of India and it has also paid huge sums of royalty to the Government of Karnataka. Previously, there were 9,000 employees, but after 1993, when they said that it was a loss-making company, they started reducing the strength of the employees. Now the strength of the employees has been reduced to 4,400. Most of them are Dalits and are depending on the gold mines only. Now, the Government wants to close it down because it is a loss-making company. Who is responsible for that? Is it the poor employees who work hard from morning till evening for a fixed time who are responsible? It is the management personnel who are responsible for the losses. Irresponsibility and laxity at the management level has caused the company losses. When the industry becomes sick, the Government takes a decision to close it down and it is the poor workers who have to bear the brunt of this decision. In the guise of an offer of voluntary retirement from service, they are given some compensation and sent away. These workers, who are always in a debt trap, will spend the money given to them more quickly than they can think and, after the money has been spent, they would be on the streets.

These workers generally have large families and they will definitely have sons and daughters to be educated and married off. Under these circumstances, without a job, they will not be able to fulfil these social commitments. This will also lead to some socio-economic problems, and it is only such circumstances which create naxalites, radicals and extremists.

This gold mine is situated in a city called Kolar Goldfields in the district of Kolar, State of Karnataka. By closing down this gold mine, the Government will be not only destroying a historic gold mine, but also the beautiful city of KGF. KGF has got the infrastructure, skilled labour and potentialities to start many industries. The workers' union of the BGML and other experts have given many plans to revive the BGML. Some of the suggestions are: (1) As per the GSI reports, there is a feasibility

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forexploration of gold through shallow mines, without loss, by engaging BGML workers. (2) BGML has a good industrial infrastructure and, at present, is manufacturing rail wagons. A separate engineering unit may be set up with engineering facilities and machinery, and the technical employees of the BGML may be shifted to this unit to increase the production of wagons. (3) A Mining Research Institute may be set up and the existing qualified engineers may be assigned to impart training to the mining and geology students, by utilising the BGML administrative staff. (4) The sand rocks, deep mines, excavated structures, mining shafts, etc., may attract tourists from all over the world. KGF may be declared as a tourist centre and the required facilities may be extended to it by the Ministry of Tourism.

The experienced BGML workers may be assigned to take the tourists deep inside the mines and shafts to guide and explain to the tourists the procedures and methods of extraction of gold. This will generate some income and solve, to some extent, the unemployment problem in the existing BGML, in the event of its being closed down. If it is not viable to run this industry, the Government should take some steps to set up some alternate industries there. Sir, the KGF is a beautiful city, which now looks like the erstwhile Bangalore, as it was in 1950 or 1955. It is a city which looks like a mini-England. The KGF can definitely become a tourist ..(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, now it is one o'clock. There are three more Members who want to associate themselves with this Special Mention. After this, there are two more Special Mentions. Should we(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Let the Special Mentions be over so that, after lunch, straightaway, we can take up the Appropriation (Railways) No. 2 Bill, 2000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, we can take up the other two Special Mentions also. I think the way the hon. Member is speaking...(*Interruption*)

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The Special Mentions can be continued up to 1.30. After that, we can resume at 2.30.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have no objection.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): We can break it up just now. Then, after lunch, we can take it up for another half-an-hour.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: No, no. Then it will be extended further. So, let us finish it now*(Interruptions)*... It is all right. So, Sir, my suggestion would be, let it be finished by 1.30. If the hon. Members also cooperate with the Chair, House can be adjourned for an hour, till 2.30. Then, we can straightaway take up the Government business, i.e. the Appropriation (Railways) No. 2 Bill, 2000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that okay?

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU(Karnataka) : We can finish it within 20-25 minutes. Let us stick to the time schedule. Then, lunch- break.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, we will continue till we finish this. Mr. Krishna Murthy, please wind up.

SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY(Karnataka) : Sir, this KGF city is a very well-known city in Karnataka and in South India. If these mines are going to be closed down, there will be some problem. This particular place has in it the anglo-Indian community and other community people also. They belong to Scheduled Castes and they are Tamilians. They speak Tamil. It will be very difficult for those people to find for themselves any job elsewhere in Karnataka. Mobility will not be possible. So, some alternative arrangement has to be found for KGF. I appeal to the Government to give a serious thought to this and not close down this Gold Mines for the moment, and to set up alternative industries so that this beautiful city is saved. Thank you very much Sir, for having given me this opportunity to speak in this august House for the first time. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Manoj Bhattacharya, you will only associate.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal): I assure you, Sir, that I will be very brief. Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention raised by hon. Member, Shri K.B. Krishna Murthy. Sir, this is a clear fall-out of the neo-liberalisation i.e. liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the WTO, which are out, with their fangs open, to protect and promote the interests of the imperialist countries, particularly, USA. The primary recommendation of neo-liberalisation is rolling back to the State, particularly, in regard to the welfare commitments of the State. As such, our country is reeling under a heavy burden of unemployment; and when our Government is utterly failing to advance any well-meaning steps to

address this menacing problem, a large number of employees are being forced out of their jobs, adding to the already worrisome number of unemployed. Sir, the PSUs like the Bharat Gold Mines, or, for that matter, any other PSU, including the blue chip companies, are bent upon downsizing the number of employees by hook or crook. The Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) is only a glamorous name for Compulsory Retirement Scheme (CRS), that is, the backdoor method of retrenchment. In this particular issue of Bharat Gold Mines, as my friend, Mr. K.B. Krishna Murthy said, that nearly 4500 people -- the number has already been downsized, i.e. from 9000 to 4500; needless to say they were very much ill-paid-- who are now left, can hardly afford to live with the paltry sum that is being offered to them. I am not worried about the sum which is being offered to them. My protest is against the means, whatever is being adopted, to reduce the number of employees, downsizing it, then handing it over to private companies. That is a very bad design of the Government of India, being pursued very vigorously at present. It had started in 1991 after the promulgation of the new economic policy. It is being followed very vigorously by the present Government without caring for the entire social balance which is at peril as on today. Sir, I appeal, through you, to the Government that this sort of retrenchments and this sort of blatant attacks on the working class, this sort of blatant attacks on the employees should be stopped forthwith. The Government, instead of handing over the PSUs to the private parties, should come out with some methods to make them efficient. Instead of putting them in the stranglehold of the bureaucracy, the efficiency of the public sector undertakings must be increased. After increasing the efficiency of the public sector undertakings -- and for that matter diversification can also be done -- these can be made viable. Sir, the matter raised by Shri K.B. Krishnamurthy should be looked into very seriously, not only in regard to the Bharat Gold Mines, but in respect of many other public sector undertakings also. When the PSUs are behaving like this, I am convinced that many of the private sector companies are moving in a worse manner. I can quote many examples. In the recent past, during the last six or seven years, the whole Bombay-Thane region has become smokeless. I am observing my senior colleague, Shri Adhik Shirodkar, who is looking at me. I am convinced that he would also agree with me. The whole Bombay-Thane region, an industrial belt, has been shut down thereby putting millions of workers on the streets. Their life pattern has changed. Their social problems have increased manifold. The

Government is absolutely looking at them, I should not say callously, but in an indifferent manner without any regard to the lifestyle of the common people. It is a menacing problem. It is a very serious problem. The term 'Voluntary Retirement Scheme' is being used indiscriminately. This term 'VRS' is being used indiscriminately to force the workers out of employment. This is causing a serious problem in the country. Sir, I would appeal, through you, to the Government of India that they should look into this issue very seriously and they should curb this sort of attitude towards the working class and towards the society. It is a social problem. It is a cultural problem. The entire social fabric of our country is going to be destroyed by this sort of methods which are being adopted by the Government of India and which are being encouraged by the private sector companies. With these words, I once again associate myself with issue raised by Shri K.B. Krishnamurthy. Thank you.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, probably, they are going to close this mine very shortly, in 15 or 20 day's time. Sir, Kolar symbolizes our national glory and national pride. From our childhood we are hearing about Kolar gold mines. A number of studies have been conducted. A Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry has visited this area. They have recommended that this mine could be saved. Not only in this mine but also in the entire Kolar area, sufficient gold is available. If the technology is upgraded, gold can be mined. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry has recommended this. Even the officers of the Kolar Gold mines are not in agreement with the opinion of the Government of India. I would request the Government of India to save this mine. It is not like any other mine. It is a gold mine. It is the oldest mine. It symbolizes national pride and national glory. It should be kept as a heritage even if it is closed. I would request the Government to look into this matter. It should not be closed even if you have to run it at a loss for the time being. They can hold talks with the trade unions and see how the infrastructure, and the assets of the mine can be used. Thank you.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI (Maharashtra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with this issue. It is a prime industry of India which is supplying gold to the country. The closure move has been declared by the hon. Minister, Shri Kumaramangalam, without assigning any reason. The fault

lies with the management. There has been a demand from the workers that whatever allegations have been levelled against the management should be looked into. Sir, on the closure issue, recently, the hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri S.M.Krishna, met Shri Kumaramangalam, requesting him that the closure move should be withdrawn, and he had suggested 'Golden handshake' instead. Earlier, there were altogether 9,000 workers in the Kolar Gold Mines. Now, it has been reduced to 5,000 workers. Out of this, we have accommodated 2,500 workers. Those who have left their jobs should be compensated properly, and in order to accommodate the potential of the remaining 2,500 employees, alternative measures should be taken. Sir, I will not take much time of the House, since I am just associating myself with the Special Mention raised by Shri Krishnamurthy. I only urge upon the Government that the prime industry of the country, which is of vital importance to the nation, should not be closed down. Instead, any alternative arrangement like the Golden handshake scheme could be offered.

Assault on Senior Army Officers by J.N.U. Students

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to make this Special Mention with a heavy heart. We were really shocked to see the report that in the JNU campus, two army officers, who had gone there to see the 'mushaira' were mercilessly beaten up; they were seriously injured and were admitted in the hospital. I was also a student activist. I was president of the Students Union as well. I don't want to enter into a controversy between the army personnel and the student community. But the incident is highly condemnable, and it does not behove well for the student community also to defend the people who are involved in this incident. Sir, on 29th evening, there was a 'mushaira', a 'kavi sammelan', going on in the JNU campus. Two army officers, Major L.K. Sharma and Major K.K. Sharma, were passing through that area. They noticed this programme and they enquired with the security staff whether they could attend the same. When the security staff allowed them, they went inside. Unfortunately, in the course of the programme, some poetess or the person, who organised it, seemed to have made certain critical remarks about India, including equating India with Pakistan, which were highly objectionable. Naturally, any person with patriotic spirit in his heart would get enraged by such comments. These people, being army officers, were, naturally, provoked by these comments, and they also seemed to have