

**REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT RELATED PARLIAMENTARY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS**

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I lay on the Table a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Petroleum and Chemicals on 'Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO)'.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

The Multimodal Transportation of Goods (Amendment) Bill, 2000

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to inform you that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on the 24th November, 2000, agreed without any amendment to the Multimodal Transportation of Goods (Amendment) Bill, 2000, which was passed by Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 22nd August, 2000."

MATTER RAISED WITH PERMISSION

Amending Master Plan of Delhi

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI (Delhi): Sir, Delhi bandh is being observed today and children are losing school days continuously. Earlier, we saw violence, causing loss of lives and damage to property. Many people were injured. I am very sorry to say that the Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment seems to be still living in the Delhi of 25 years ago, when he was the Lt. Governor of Delhi. He does not seem to take into account the pressures of population growth and the pressures of development. He is still living in that, and that is not possible. If we raise this issue, Sir, the Minister says that we are against the environment. If we raise an issue which is causing a great upheaval in Delhi today, the Minister replies that we are on the side of the violators of the law. If we raise this issue, the Minister informs us that we are not for a beautiful Delhi. Sir, this is not true. He has not got the copyright over making Delhi a beautiful city and protecting the law-abiding citizens.

Sir, he had assured us, once in this House and once in the other House, that he would amend the Master Plan to take into account some very reasonable demands which have been made, such as regularisation and broad-basing the list of industries which are run as household industries and service based industries. He makes one assurance on the floor of the House and then, at a press conference, he says something else.

I would say that we too want to live in a beautiful Delhi. We too want to bequeath a happy and beautiful Delhi to our children; but that should not apply to only some people living in Delhi. Every citizen of Delhi has the capacity, the power or the right to bequeath a good and beautiful Delhi to our children. Today, when there are lakhs of people on the roads because of unemployment, can the Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment not take into consideration regularisation of a lot of irregular colonies? The papers are still lying with his Ministry. Why does he not consider regularisation of those colonies with a mixed land-use? If he does that, for a lot of small industries, which are run in these irregular colonies--which he is planning to regularise things would be all right. Why does he not consider broad-basing the Master Plan? The antiquated Master Plan says that if you are a 1 KW user of electricity, if you have six people working, it would become a non-conforming industry. Why does he not accede to this small request, of broad-basing this? I would also tell him one more thing. If there are polluting industries, no one in this House or outside would ask you for the continuation of polluting industries in the residential areas.

Why not develop an industrial estate? Why make villages of Bawana the dumping ground of pollution? Why not make, totally, an industrial estate where you can take the polluting industries so that the people living in the rural areas are not made to suffer by pollution? There should not be any discrimination between those who are living in the urban areas and those who are living in the rural areas.

Lastly, I would like the Minister to tell us, here and now, when is he planning to meet the Chief Minister of Delhi, the Members of Parliament and all others with whom he has assured a meeting. Then, we can take up these demands, in a proper way. Keeping all of us in this kind of limbo and in total vacuum, with no one knowing where they are going and what they have to do, is not good for the life and health of Delhi. Thank you.

श्री एस. एस. अहलुवालिया (झारखंड) : समापति महोदय, यह दूसरा सोमवार है जब दिल्ली के पीड़ित लोगों ने अपनी आवाज उठाने के लिए एक धर्म हठ का, हड़ताल का ऐलान किया है। इस कारण दिल्लीवासियों को काफी तकलीफें हो रही हैं। उसके बावजूद भी आम लोगों की धारणा कुछ ऐसी है कि न्यायपालिका ने जो निर्देश दिया है और उस निर्देश का जिस प्रकार से पालन किया जा रहा है उससे तो ऐसा लगता है कि धर्मराज से धर्म को जोड़ा गया है, धर्म को न्याय से जोड़ा गया है और न्याय धर्म बना है। अतः न्याय धर्म में आस्था होनी चाहिए, आतंक नहीं होना चाहिए। एक आतंक का सा माहौल बन गया है। जिस तरह से लोग जबर्न बंद कर रहे हैं, ताले लगा रहे हैं, सील कर रहे हैं उस संदर्भ में जरूरी तो यह था कि उद्योगों का वर्गीकरण कर दिया जाता। समापति महोदय, लघु, कुटीर, मध्यम और बड़े उद्योगों में कौन से उद्योग प्रदूषण फैलाते हैं, कौन से नहीं फैलाते, कौन से उद्योग रिहायशी इलाकों में रह सकते हैं, कौन से नहीं रह सकते, का वर्गीकरण होना चाहिए था जो नहीं हुआ। अभी भी वक्त है सरकार को ये मांगें मान लेनी चाहिए क्योंकि संविधान ने हर नागरिक को रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान का अधिकार दिया है। पर्यावरण की बात तो वह करेगा जिसके पेट में रोटी होगी, रोजगार होगा, पेट भरा होगा। पर्यावरण और प्रदूषण को देखना हो तो जो भूखे पेट हैं, तकलीफें में रहते हैं, यमुना नदी का गंदा पानी पीकर अपनी प्यास बुझाने के लिए मजबूर हैं, को देखिए। गांवों का विकास नहीं हुआ और लोग गांवों से पलायन कर रोटी कमाने के लिए यहां आ गए। इस प्रकार आबादी बढ़ी, आबादी बढ़ने के साथ-साथ उनकी जरूरतें बढ़ी, बाजार बड़े और उन बाजारों की भरपाई करने के लिए उद्योग बड़े। ये उद्योग दिल्ली के अंदर और निकटवर्ती राज्यों में हैं। दिल्ली के बाजार सिर्फ दिल्ली के नहीं बल्कि पूरे भारत के बाजार भी हैं। समापति महोदय, यदि इन उद्योगों का वर्गीकरण नहीं करेंगे तो जिस प्रकार से सड़कों पर न्यायपालिका के निर्देश की अयहेलना की मांग उठ रही है, नारे लग रहे हैं, वे कल खतरनाक भी साबित हो सकते हैं। इन सारी बातों को रोकने के लिए, इन पर गंभीरता से विचार करने की जरूरत है। अभी मंत्री महोदय ने कहा कि वे मुख्य मंत्री और दिल्ली के सांसदों के साथ बैठकर कोई फैसला करेंगे तो यह फैसला अविलंब होना चाहिए। इसकी कोशिश होनी चाहिए कि यह संघर्ष बंद हो, न्यायपालिका के आदेश का पालन हो, जनता की रोटी न छिने और पर्यावरण भी प्रदूषित न हो।

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): My humble submission is this. This should not be treated as and reduced to a problem of pollution. This is a huge displacement of industries and manpower. The workers are being openly called as hooligans, when those people who are calling them hooligans are themselves parasites, living on the labour of the labourers. This is a matter which has to be taken up politically. It is neither a legal issue, entirely, nor an environmental issue. It is, basically, a political issue which has been allowed to groom for decades. Sir, it is a question of lakhs of workers. You just cannot remove them like this, at the wisdom of a court order or a decision of the Government.

You have to talk with the political parties. You have to talk with all to settle it. In the meantime, these workers should not be disturbed. Sir, I drew the attention of the Hon'ble Minister but he has not answered.

Around 200 industries have been closed, but not even a single worker has been compensated. Rather, they are called hooligans. Hooligans! It is the main headline of newspapers. Don't you feel ashamed of it? I am a worker. I feel my pride is injured, when I am called a hooligan. I represent those hooligans. The people who call them hooligans are themselves parasites, living on the labour of the labour. Something has to be done. This cannot be allowed to be perpetuated. If it is allowed, Sir, I am telling you, he will not be successful. There will be riots in Delhi. You will not be able to stop them. Then, it will be the end of everything. You will not be able to touch anything. If you reduce the problem to a matter of environment then you are finished. The system is finished. You will not be able to protect anybody. That is why I urge upon the Government to take a political view of the matter and settle the things.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would strongly support what the hon. Member, Shrimati Ambika Soni, has said. The Minister's stand on the environment, while seemingly welcome and laudable, is arbitrary and completely insensitive to the problems of thousands of people who are being displaced. Sir, there is absolutely no rehabilitation policy in this country. We do not have a rehabilitation policy for ordinary poor people, who don't have a voice, when they are displaced, like in the case of huge dams, such as, Narmada. Thousands and thousands of people are being displaced from their homes, from their living, from their livelihood, and he is talking about environment! The important part of environment is the lives and livelihood of these poor people. It is completely elitist and insensitive for the Minister to act as if nobody else has a concern for the environment, and only they have a monopoly on the concern for environment. Let us first be concerned with the lives of these people. That is more important than environment itself. Let him first give us an answer to that before accusing the others of causing pollution. Far greater pollution...*(Interruptions)* Sir, it is my final sentence. They allow a far greater pollution, like the pollution affecting the Taj Mahal, but this kind of thing...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have asked the Minister.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI JAGMOHAN): Sir, I must first make it very clear that the Government is neither anti-labour nor anti-industrialists. Let it be very clear. I will...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJU PARMAR (Gujarat): It is hundred per cent.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, they must listen to me properly. They can't expect me again and again. *(Interruptions)*

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तरांचल): सम्पादित जी ने कहा है। उनको बोलने दीजिए।
...(व्यवधान)...

प्रो. रामदेव भंडारी (बिहार): हमेशा नेगेटिव बात करते रहते हैं।

SHRI JAGMOHAN: They probably know what is coming. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister speak.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, first, my submission is that all that has been stated is largely based on wrong substance, wrong facts, wrong fundamentals and tendential reporting. No one wants to displace anybody. The point that has been made by the Supreme Court is that since 1996, it has been passing orders and the State Government of Delhi has been assuring, "Yes, these orders will be implemented, and they will be relocated. All those industries which are illegal will be shut down. Those which are polluting will be taken away." So, the issue today is non-implementation of the orders, non-implementation of assurance... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JIBON ROY: The issue is different.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: I have, in my written statement, listed all those statements and all those orders that... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him speak. *(Interruptions)* No, no. Sit down Mr. Jibon Roy, please sit down. You have already spoken. Now, the Minister has to speak. *(Interruptions)* I have asked the Minister to respond to the questions. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGMOHAN: These are not my orders. These are the orders of the Supreme Court. *(Interruptions)*

The background which the Supreme Court is giving is, since 1996, it has been issuing orders, and despite the assurances, despite their agreement to acquire land in Bawana, and despite saying that by 1997, this

land will be acquired, nothing has been done. Now, the Supreme Court has passed strictures on the ground that they are not doing their job deliberately, to ensure that there is *in situ* regularisation of these industries here. So, they are not legally correct in that sense. In 1990, Parliament had passed the Master Plan. It is they who had approved the pattern which is being followed; these were your directions that we are following; it is your environmental law that is being followed; it is not something that I have brought out. The issue today is, there are 50,000 legal industries which have been properly located. The people are working there. But this is an issue of a different category of industries. Nevertheless, in my statement in this August House, the other day, I had made it clear that notwithstanding what happened in the past; notwithstanding the lapses on the part of various authorities, I am not apportioning blame to anyone. The fact is that, today, we are confronted with a problem because the Supreme Court has passed an order in this regard. And today, I am saying it that we will take all the relevant facts into account; such as, the difficulties which the house-owners are experiencing because there are industries underneath the houses and which are illegally set up. So the house owners have their own grievances; the industries may have their own hardships; and the labour may have its own problems. Our job is to find a constructive and creative solution to the problem and that is what I am endeavouring to do. Today, newspapers are carrying out surveys. Yesterday also, there was a survey. All of them, nearly 87 per cent, have supported the removal of these industries from the residential areas because the house-owners are also claiming the same. I had mentioned it in the Lok Sabha also that there were larger issues involved in it. What about the Fire Safety Act? I am asking this House: Can a residential area which is meant for a small street pattern, where water, sewers, etc., have been laid down for residential purposes be converted into an industrial area overnight? *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let him speak.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Can the Fire Safety Act be ignored? Can the environmental lobby, water pollution and others be ignored? Therefore, my submission is, we have submitted to the Supreme Court that we are willing to redefine the cottage industries. To that extent, we are willing to consider amendment to the Master Plan. In fact, there are three aspects: first, we are willing to consider amendment to the Master Plan, to the extent of accommodating non-polluting industries and to the extent of redefining the

cottage industries. We are prepared to do so, provided the Supreme Court gives us the permission. Secondly, we are even prepared to add more area to Bawana, Narela and other areas. If there are more people, then we would accommodate them there. Thirdly, I have already said in my statement, both in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, that we would request the Supreme Court to give us more time. Notwithstanding the lapses that the other authorities have committed, we are asking the Supreme Court to give us more time. But the point here is, the approach has to be constructive. By just raising these issues; by making this a confrontational issue; the problem is not going to be solved. I have said 'I am prepared to meet anybody'. But the suggestion should be within the framework of law and it should be acceptable to the Supreme Court also. So far as the question of amending the Master Plan goes, the amendment to the Master Plan has to be carried out within a particular framework. You cannot amend the Master Plan in such a way that would destroy the very purpose of planning. I will always say. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JIBON ROY: You should call a meeting of all the parties. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is prepared to meet everybody. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGMOHAN: So far as labour is concerned. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to meet the Chief Minister and others?

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Yes, Sir. I am prepared to meet everybody. I have already said this. You know. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: It is not a question of meeting everybody. It is a question of meeting Members of Parliament, the Chief Minister or judges and having a proper discussion. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should hold discussion with Members of Parliament and others. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGMOHAN: They have already met me, Sir. She has also met me twice. I am prepared to meet even today.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Why should I come when I am not invited?
(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGMOHAN: I have already invited you. If you want, you can also come.

SHRI JIBON ROY: We want that the matter should be settled in a proper manner..(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGMOHAN: You are also welcome to discuss it.
(Interruptions)

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Are you willing to hold a meeting now? (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: You are also welcome to discuss it. The only point which I want to make clear, Sir, relates to the questions which were raised by Mrs. Ambika Soni about polluting industries. She said that the industries should remain; why they are being taken to Bawana; Bawana will become polluted; etc. No, Sir, this is not the point. The point is, in those areas, proper industrial layouts have been prepared, and anti-pollution devices have been installed or would be installed. The basic idea is that a single industry cannot afford to have an anti-polluting device because it is costly. But, if it is for a group of industries, then it becomes economical. Sir, this is in the interests of the industries themselves. Therefore, that is the logic for relocating them there. And the second point which was made is about the labour. In fact, this is the greatest pro-labour Act in my view.
...(Interruptions)...

SHRI JIBON ROY: You come along with me and tell the labour that this is a pro-labour Act. ... (Interruptions)... Please come along with me. You address the labour and the industrialists together. ... (Interruptions)... Don't make fun that this is a pro-labour Act. ... (Interruptions)... Are they foolish? ... (Interruptions)... You come along with me and address them. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jibon Roy, let him reply. ... (Interruptions)...

श्री सुरेश पचौरी (मध्य प्रदेश) : सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी के समक्ष जो मुद्दे उठाए गए हैं उन मुद्दों से हटकर वे बातें कह रहे हैं ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI JIBON ROY: I humbly request the Leader of the House to tell us as to what is the position and intervene. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री सुरेश पचौरी : महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी के अडियल रुख की वजह से दिल्ली की यह स्थिति निर्मित हुई है कि आज दिल्ली बंद है। सारा जनजीवन अस्त व्यस्त हो गया है। जो मुद्दे अम्बिका जी ने उठाए हैं उन मुद्दों का उत्तर मंत्री जी नहीं दे पा रहे हैं। इनके अडियल रुख की वजह से आज यह हालत हो रही है कि बच्चे स्कूल नहीं जा पा रहे हैं। लोग सड़कों पर उतर आए हैं। कानून और व्यवस्था की हालत बहुत जर्जर हो गयी है। आम आदमी का जनजीवन अस्त व्यस्त हो गया है। पूरी दिल्ली बंद है। इतने दिनों से दिल्ली की यह हालत है। आपके कान में जू तक नहीं रंग रही थी। कब से यह माग आ रही थी कि मास्टर प्लान जो है वह संशोधित किया जाए। हम आपके माध्यम से जानना चाहते हैं कि वह मुहूर्त कब निकलेगा जब आप जनप्रतिनिधियों से बात करेंगे? वह मुहूर्त कब निकलेगा जब आप मास्टर प्लान संशोधित करेंगे? लम्बे समय से यह बात चल रही है। लेकिन मुहूर्त अभी तक नहीं निकला है। यह बात आती है कि इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया को डेवलप किया जाए। कब डेवलप करेंगे, यह बात आपने स्पष्ट रूप से नहीं कही है। कब आप प्रतिनिधियों से मिलेंगे यह आपने स्पष्ट तिथि नहीं बतायी है। कब आप मास्टर प्लान संशोधित करेंगे यह स्पष्ट रूप से आपने नहीं कहा है। ये सारी बातें गोलमोल ढंग से की जा रही हैं और उसकी परिणति यह है कि आज दिल्ली बंद है। लोग सड़कों पर हैं। आम आदमी परेशान हैं। लोग अपने बच्चों को स्कूल नहीं भेज पा रहे हैं। इसलिए मैं आपसे संरक्षण चाहूंगा सभापति महोदय। मंत्री जी को निर्देश दिया जाए कि तिथि निश्चित करें और स्पष्ट रूपरेखा तय करें।

SHRI JIBON ROY: He is adding salt to the injury. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAGMOHAN: I will not go into this. The only question is, when you are short of arguments, you raise this issue. I am raising an argument here. The argument is, it is a pro-labour Act, in the sense that at present those labourers are nowhere being accommodated by these industries which employ them. They are just living in some odd places. I will very humbly invite the attention of this very House that by this type of haphazard method, it is the poor who suffers the most...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA (West Bengal): They are suffering because of your decisions....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Last year, in 1999, in Lal Kuan

...*(Interruptions)*... You do not want to listen to facts. You only want to raise the voice....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JIBON ROY: You do not want to protect a single worker.
...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete. ...*(Interruptions)*... You have already spoken. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, what I am saying is that it harms the poor man.

Last year, in 1999, in Lal Kuan, because of the location of a factory in the residential area, 50 people were burnt alive. It has all been reported.

SHRI JIBON ROY: That is why you are killing everybody.
...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री राजू परमार : पहले भी आप ने यही जवाब दिया है, क्या नई बात बता रहे हैं आप? .. *(व्यवधान)*...सर, मंत्री जी यही बात रिपीट कर रहे हैं, कोई नई बात नहीं बता रहे हैं !
...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI JAGMOHAN: What are you doing?

SHRI RAJU PARMAR: It is the same reply that he has given.
(Interruptions)

श्री जगमोहन : जो आप को कहना है, आप मेरे बाद कह लेजिएगा । सर, मैं कह रहा था ...

SHRI JIBON ROY: Do you agree that it is an environmental issue or not? A population of one crore has been involved in it.

श्री संघ प्रिय गीतम : आप हर समय चिल्लाते रहते हो और सदन का समय बर्बाद करते हो। सर, उन्हें रोकिए। ये हर समय चिल्लाते हैं। आखिर कोई लिमिट होनी चाहिए।
...*(व्यवधान)* ..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, I am saying that it is on the balance of all considerations that a decision is taken. It is not taken considering only one-sided picture. All issues are taken into account.

If they listen to me, what I am trying to say is that in Narela already 50,000 plots are being developed for being given to these poor people, and 15,000 people have already been resettled by me.

(Interruptions) ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jibon Roy, sit down. You are not allowing him to speak. How many times do you get up? Please sit down.*(Interruptions)*...

Let him complete

SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: We have heard him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not heard him. You are speaking for yourself..... *(Interruptions)*

I have permitted him to speak....*(Interruptions)*....

She has raised the issue. I asked him to intervene. *(Interruptions)*...

That is why he is speaking.....*(Interruptions)*....

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : आप अकेले ठेकेदार हो दिल्ली के हम नहीं हैं? हमें चिंता नहीं है दिल्ली की, हमें चिंता नहीं है मजदूरों की? ...*(व्यवधान)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record. What Mr. Jibon Roy says will not go on record....*(Interruptions)*....

Let him complete.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: What is being done is that not only relocation of industries. As per their own agreement of all parties concerned, since 1996, only that thing is being implemented. It is now being implemented in a more liberal way, in the sense that I am providing for labour what nobody had earlier provided.

Fifteen per cent of land is being reserved for resettlement purposes. None of these gentlemen has gone to Narela. I have developed it during the last two months. I can tell you that none of them has gone there. Had they gone there, they would not have raised this. Sir, I have gone there six times. I can tell you that the area has been developed. An organized layout is there. Water is there. Electricity is there. Power is there. Individual plots have been given to 15,000 persons. They can see

that. Not only that, but they have also been provided the HUDCO loans. We have taken the Technology Centres there. It is a transfer of technology that has taken place. We have even built schools, spending Rs.6 crores. I have sanctioned Rs.6 crores. Show me any school that has been built for the poor labour in any area during the last ten to fifteen years. What are the facts? You should not teach mathematics. These are the facts. Come with me. I will show these things to you.

Dr. Karan Singhji was making his speech on that day. I have got great respect for him. If that speech is now shown to international fora where he really goes, there will be a tremendous contradiction between the two.

They say that we take a political issue and not an environmental issue. The Environment Act was passed by this hon. House, not by me, taking into consideration the political issue, the environmental issue as well as the human issue....(Interruptions)...

I have made this clear in my written statement. It can be read.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Special Mentions. Dr. M.N.Das.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I asked the Minister a couple of simple questions. One was the issue of regularisation of many irregular colonies, which is pending with his Ministry. When he regularises them, would he be willing to give a mixed land-used certificate in respect of small industries which are non-polluting, in a way, non-performing?

SHRI JAGMOHAN: I hope the hon. Member is referring to the unauthorised residential colonies. This issue is pending in the Delhi High Court. The High Court had asked for the views of the Union Government. We have already submitted these views, after the Cabinet took a decision. I hope, she must have read about it in the newspaper. It has all appeared in the newspaper, not once, but a number of times...(Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Dr. M.N. Das. Special Mentions. ... (Interruptions)... Special Mentions. ... (Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record. ... (Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record. ... (Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record. ... (Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record. Special Mentions. Dr. M.N. Das.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Taliban's Demand for Return of Koh-i-noor Diamond from Britain

DR.M.N. DAS (Orissa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving your kind permission to raise a Special Mention on an insignificant matter. When the whole House is agitated over a burning issue of the day..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you speaking on your Special Mention or not?

DR. M.N. DAS: No, Sir. I feel very sorry that I have to speak something which is rather irrelevant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You don't want to speak?

DR. M.N. DAS: I am speaking. Since you have already...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You see, I have taken up Special Mentions.

DR.M.N. DAS: I am just reading the text.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

DR.M.N. DAS: First, I say..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't say, "first". You read out your Special Mention.

DR. M.N. DAS: Sir, my Special Mention pertains to the Taliban's demand for return of the Kohinoor diamond from Britain, which was taken away from India.

It is a well-known fact that the world-famous Kohinoor diamond belonged to India from time immemorial, though it passed under different names at different times. In the middle ages, it was Sultan Alauddin Khilji who took it away from the Hindu King of Malwa. But the Hindu Raja of Gwalior got it back. With the Mughal invasion, Badshah Babar acquired it; and till the decline of his dynasty, it was preserved by his successors as their preciousmost gem. In the year 1739, the Persian invader, Nadir Shah, took away the diamond by trick from the defeated Mughal Emperor, Mohammad Shah. Nadir Shah gave the diamond a new name, that is, Kohinoor or the Mountain of Light. After Nadir's death, the King of Kabul captured the diamond. But it was Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab who finally took possession of the Kohinoor from the Afghans. When the British conquered Punjab, they acquired it from King Dilip Singh, son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Governor-General of the time sent it forthwith to Queen Victoria; and till now the diamond is in Britain.