

SHRI MA. BABY (Kerala): Madam, what is the affair?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As long as it is limited to Parliament, we will be happy. If the affair goes out of this Parliament, then it will be beyond my jurisdiction.

SHRI M.A. BABY: It seems to be an internal affair.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I hope so.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Jagannath Mishra has raised a very serious matter about the loss of life of his brother. There may be many others who are subjected to inconvenience because of non-availability of communication facility such as STD in the smaller towns. I believe there was a suggestion made in the past in this House. And the Minister of Communications accepted the suggestion and assured the House that he would take care of this. The Ministers concerned have time and again assured that there would be some way of communication in every panchayat. Now Shri Mishra has lost his brother. I would like you to convey to the Minister of Communications that he should look into this matter. We are going to enter the 21st century. It would not be proper if people have to suffer on account of lack of communication facilities even today.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): Madam, I will certainly bring it to the notice of the Minister of Communications.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. You would not only bring it to his notice, you would also have to ensure that the wires are connected. I know your wire is connected with the Minister. But he has to connect all those places where there is such a problem.

RE: FALL IN PRICES OF RUBBER

SHRI JOY NADUKKARA (Kerala): Madam, rubber growers in this country are on the verge of eruption. There is a sharp fall in the prices of rubber in the recent months. In the month of May, 95, the per kilogram price of rubber was Rs. 60.50 ps and in June, 95, it

was Rs. 61.70ps. In May, 96, it was Rs. 52.50ps and in June, 96, it was Rs. 53.80ps. Unfortunately, the per kilogram price of rubber last week was only Rs. 42.50ps. When you compare the current price of rubber with the price during 1995, there is a fall in the price of rubber by about Rs. 20/- per kilogram. The total loss caused to the rubber growers in this country during the last 3-4 months alone will amount to Rs. 550 crores.

There are about 8.65 lakh rubber cultivators in this country. Almost all of them are small farmers with small holdings. Their families are depending on the income generated from the rubber cultivation. In addition to them, There is an equal number of labourers who are connected with rubber cultivation, i.e., those who are engaged in tapping of the rubber. The total number of people who are dependent on rubber cultivation, therefore, comes to about 17 lakhs.

The total area under rubber cultivation in 1995-96 was 52 lakh hectares. This shows how important rubber cultivation is to the agricultural community in this country.

One of the important problems faced by the rubber growers is that the industry is not in a position to consume the rubber produced in this country. There is surplus rubber in this country. The estimated rubber production in 1996-97 would be 5.85 lakh tonnes. But the consumption is only 5.60 lakh tonnes. Thus, there will be 25,000 tonnes of surplus rubber in this country. Added to this is, there, the carry-over of the last year's stock which is about 16,000 tonnes. Apart from all this, about 20,000 tonnes were imported during 96-97. Thus, the surplus is going to be around 61,000 tonnes. In this situation, the intervention of the Central Government is very necessary. The Government has to take the following steps: Firstly, the STC, the NAFED and the Rubber Marketing Federation must enter the market and purchase 30,000 tonnes of rubber from the domestic market and stock it for at least three months, until the lean period starts. The Government has to assure flow the credit from financial institutions to these agencies. If necessary, the Government should provide guarantees for the repayment of money.

Secondly, the Government will have to take steps to export at least 20,000 tons of rubber. The price of rubber is a bit higher in the international market. And if there is any loss in export, that can be compensated by utilising a portion of the amount collected by the Rubber Board as Rubber Cess. The Rubber Board is collecting Rs. 60/- crores as Rubber Cess every year. Thirdly, there is an import duty in the case of rubber. It was 25% earlier and in the last budget it was reduced to 20%. This reduction in the import duty has influenced the downfall in the price of rubber. So, the import duty must be raised from 20% to 30%. Fourthly, instead of allowing the exporters to import rubber, they must be asked to purchase rubber from the domestic market and that can be treated as 'deemed imports'. This will check the flow of about 20,000 tons of rubber to the domestic market. The fifth point is that there is a total production of 60,000 tons of centrifuge latex in this country. The centrifuge latex is also facing a severe crisis in its prices. The factories are stopping production because they cannot sell their products. So, some steps have to be taken to help centrifuge latex factories also. The Government has allowed the import of polyurethane foam into this country. This polyurethane, which is hazardous to health, is banned in many countries. In Malaysia, it is banned to help the agriculturists and in the Western countries it is banned because of health hazards. But here we are allowing import of polyurethane in plenty. So, it has to be checked and the import of polyurethane must be banned. Then, it is also said that rubber can be used for rubberisation of roads. But the Government is preventing the rubberisation of roads. For the last so many years, they have been saying that they are experimenting. This experiment has to be completed so that rubber can be used for rubberisation of roads. It will also help the durability of roads. A large quantity of rubber can be used for this purpose. So, I request the Government to take all these steps so that the rubber growers in this country are helped.

SHRI M.A. BABY (Kerala): Madam, I want just half-a-minute. I want to associate myself with what my friend, Mr. Joy Nadukkara, has said. He has explained all the major points relating to this matter. I would like to add only

one thing. 95% of the growers are poor farmers. Therefore, whenever a fluctuation in price takes place, the poorest get affected adversely. Therefore, Madam, through you, I request the Minister to assure that the Government will examine this so that the price fluctuation does not affect adversely the poor farmers. I think the Minister may oblige.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, finally we have to adjourn the House because we have one hour only.

SHRI M.A. BABY Madam, I think the Minister is willing to respond.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can tell the Minister outside in the Lobby also. There are three Zero Hour submissions — Shri Moolchand Meena, Shri Sanjay Nirupam and Shri Fernandes. We will take these up at 2'0 clock. Then there will be a statement by the Minister also.

Th... House is adjourned till two for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at four minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled after lunch at eight minutes past two of the clock. The Deputy Chairman in the Chair.

उपसभापति : मंत्री जी, आपका स्टेटमेंट स्पेशल मेंशन के बाद होगा।

RE: ATROCITIES ON WOMEN OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

श्री मूलचन्द मीणा (राजस्थान): मैडम, मैं सरकार का ध्यान एक ऐसे वर्ग की ओर दिलाना चाहता हूँ जि पर अत्याचार हो रहे हैं, जि पर बलात्कार हो रहे हैं और यह वर्ग है, महिला वर्ग। शैड्यूल्ट कास्ट और शैड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स की महिलाओं के साथ इस देश में, चाहे आप उत्तर प्रदेश की घटनाओं को लें, चाहे बिहार की घटनाओं को लें, इस तरह की घटनायें महिलाओं के साथ बड़ी संख्या में हो रही हैं। राजस्थान को ही लें, वहां पर महिलाओं के साथ उच्च वर्ग के लोगों द्वारा उन पर अत्याचार के साथ-साथ सामूहिक बलात्कार भी किए रहे हैं। राजस्थान के झालावाड़ डिस्ट्रिक्ट के अंदर, कोटा डिस्ट्रिक्ट के अंदर और पाली डिस्ट्रिक्ट के अंदर शैड्यूल्ड कास्ट की महिलाओं के साथ