

and environmental law and the prawn culture can be developed in the coastal areas.

But, unfortunately, Sir, after the judgement, the Government of India has not taken any steps. Though some meetings were held, no final decision has been taken. The point is that it is not the Government alone which is losing the foreign exchange. The farmers who have invested the money, have been affected. Those people have to be protected. The export houses also have been affected. No foreign exchange is coming from this. Therefore, it is a very critical situation. This will lead to a law and order problem in the coastal areas. If the District Collector goes and tries to demolish the ponds, the farming community will agitate against the step, and there will be a law and order problem.

Therefore, to resolve this problem, the Ministry of Agriculture should immediately act to protect the farming community for the purpose of increasing the production of marine products. This has to be taken up on a priority basis by the Government of India.

Thank you, Sir.

Agitation by S.C./S.T./O.B.C. Employees of Bank of India Zonal Office, Nagpur, against caste biased and anti-reservation attitude of the Management of the Bank

श्री रामनाथ कोविन्द (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, सबसे पहले सदन के संचालन के लिए आज जो आपने एक महत्वपूर्ण जिम्मेदारी संभाली है, इस अवसर पर मैं आपको बधाई देता हूँ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अजीत जोगी): धन्यवाद।

श्री रामनाथ कोविन्द: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं इस सदन का और सदन के माध्यम से पूरे राष्ट्र का ध्यान राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंकों में अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति और पिछड़े वर्ग के कर्मचारियों के प्रति जो अन्यायपूर्ण स्वयं मैनेजमेंट द्वारा किया जा रहा है उससे संबंधित एक घटना के प्रति आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। महोदय, बैंक आफ इंडिया एक राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक है। पिछले करीब 15 दिनों से हम सब लोग अखबारों के माध्यम से यह समाख्य भी गए हैं कि 1995 और 1996

में सभी राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंकों में से बैंक आफ इंडिया सबसे अधिक लाभ कमाने वाला बैंक है। लेकिन, महोदय जिन कर्मचारियों ने अपने कठोर परिश्रम, लगन, मेहनत और ईमानदारी के जरिए से बैंक आफ इंडिया को सबसे, अधिकतम लाभ कमाने वाला बैंक बनाया है, उन कर्मचारियों और विशेषकर वे कर्मचारी जिनका अनुसूचित वर्ग से संबंध है जो पिछड़े वर्ग से संबंधित हैं, उनके साथ अन्याय किया जा रहा है। महोदय, इन सभी कर्मचारियों ने, हजारों कर्मचारियों ने मैनेजमेंट को अपना एक मांग पत्र दिया और जनवरी के प्रथम सप्ताह में उनको नोटिस दिया। लेकिन उनकी मांगों को नहीं माना गया। अन्तर्गत, तब सभी कर्मचारियों ने हजारों की हजारों की संख्या में नागपुर में, जहाँ उनका मंडलीय स्तर का आफिस है, वहाँ पर 5 फरवरी को घटना दिया। उसके पश्चात्, जब घटने का भी कोई प्रभाव नहीं हुआ तो उन सभी कर्मचारियों ने 21 फरवरी में आमरण अनशन पर जाने का निर्णय किया और वे 21 फरवरी से आमरण अनशन पर बैठे हुए हैं।

अतः महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से मांग करता हूँ कि सरकार इसमें हस्तक्षेप करे और मैनेजमेंट द्वारा जो संविधान में दिए गए प्रावधानों और आरक्षण के तहत भारत सरकार के जो नियम और विनियम हैं, उनकी जो अवहेलना की जा रही है वह न हो और सभी कायदे-कानूनों का पालन हो। इस मामले में मैं भारत सरकार से निवेदन करता हूँ कि वह तुरंत इसमें हस्तक्षेप करे।

Gas Blow-out in Godavari Basin

SHRI SATCHIDANANDA: (Karnataka) Sir, the ONGC well at Village Devarapalli in Rajahmundry, East Godavari District had blown out on 19th February, 1997. A fierce 150 feet high column of fire and smoke had been rising since then. The newspapers have reported that it has been extinguished with the help of US experts. The Chairman and other officers of the ONGC along with a team of US experts visited the area. This latest accident throws up several questions which require to be addressed seriously and urgently.

This blow-out is the eleventh blow-out of the ONGC wells in the area. This is not a new thing that has happened

recently. In 1993 and in 1995 also there were such blow-outs. I want to know whether the Ministry of Petroleum has taken any serious steps in the matter to control these blow-outs.

I recollect that after the 1995 blow-out the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table of our House visited the ONGC headquarters in Dehra Dun and held discussions with their management. I was also a Member of that Committee. A detailed briefing on the accident was also given to us. We were hopeful that after the Pasarlapudi accident, the ONGC itself will acquire the technology to prevent such accidents in future and to control the blow-outs. But, it seems that the ONGC has again requisitioned the services of the US experts to cap the well. Such blow-outs are not isolated incidents, they have economic, ecological and environmental implications for the Corporation and the region.

In the present case, it may take quite some time to assess the economic loss and the impact on environment.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, blow-outs during exploration of hydrocarbons is not an uncommon phenomenon. After the blow-out in March 1993, the ONGC established its regional crisis management team. The last was in February 1995. Interestingly, three blow-outs have been recorded in this area, all in a gap of two years and in the same season. In this background, I would like the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas to inform the House about the action taken to acquire the latest technology to contain the blown-out oil wells and the steps taken to minimise the recurrence of such accidents. I would also request the Minister to inform the House of the up-to-date position of the accident.

Meanwhile the Konaseema locals are angry with the ONGC for commissioning drilling operations without bothering about what would happen to them if anything went awry.

I would request the Minister to make a statement in the House on this matter so that Parliament is informed of the latest position.

According to today's newspaper reports the ONGC officers are unhappy with the requisitioning of foreign experts to control the blown-out wells. I would like to know from the Minister whether the ONGC is fully equipped with the latest technology and knowhow to extinguish and cap the blown-out oil wells.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I wish to endorse what my honourable colleague, Swami Satchidananda has said. Now, I have two specific points to raise. One is Devarapalli blow-out in the Godavari basin was not a wild cat exploratory work. It is a known region for us. Why I am emphasising on this is that this is the tenth blow-out that this region had experienced since 1980. When there is a recurrence of blow-outs, then, there has to be application of mind. Unfortunately, other than the ONGC, we do not have access to information. The ONGC is only doing damage control. They do panic management after the blow-out. Why is it that we don't pre-empt such blow-outs? We don't take precautionary measures before we enter into such zones. This high pressure gas zone is located at 2,750 metres. When you know that is a high pressure gas zone, then, specific precautions have to be taken before you enter that area. I want to know from the Minister whether the ONGC consulted the contractor before they entered this high pressure area which is known as the "thief zone." When you penetrate this area, it is known as the "thief zone." Did they enter into a contract? What were the established precautionary measures for entering this known area?

Secondly, earlier to this blow-out in Andhra Pradesh, the then Petroleum Minister, Capt. Satish Sharma had given an assurance in this House that the Government would set up an ONGC

906/RS-1018

regional office there. Sir, we are asking for a regional office because we are being subjected to this kind of blow-outs periodically. We need a regional office for better supervision so that the people can be there on the spot and have accessibility to these areas. I want to know from the Minister what is preventing the Government from executing that assurance?

Then, there was also an assurance that there would be an institute called the Delta Institute for Oil and Gas Exploration. I would like to know from the Minister what the status of establishment of this institute is.

Lastly, I want to know this from the Minister. Who computed, calculated 50 million cubic metres gas lost in terms of money? How many million cubic metres of gas has been lost in this flaring? How much does it cost the nation? These issues have been raised time and again and it is time that the Government took cognizance of this. When we allowed private people to enter our economy, a long time ago I had agitated against Rawa. I had drawn the attention to the fact that we are allowing foreign agencies to come and exploit our national resources and we do not have enough monitoring regulatory authorities to watch what would happen in these organisations of ours.

I would like to give one more word of caution. The approach roads to these blow-out sites are not adequate. And the ONGC has an undertaking to do this in various States. They have not done it even in my State. Half the problem was with regard to the access to this blow-out area. There was not a good enough road, not a wide enough road. This should be reviewed. There should be monitoring committee put on to these areas. We must see that Andhra does not repeat this unhappy experience. It is all very well to say, "The ONGC went there and the Chairman spoke, he did this and he did that". All that is of a post-mortem

effect. Who is going to compute the loss of coconut trees and of habitations, the insecurity of the people who are constantly rehabilitated from one area to another area and the fear psychosis that the comes into living near such areas? Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Shri Govindrao Adik. Absent. Dr. Mohan Babu.

Need for Uniform Film Censor Rules in Different States

DR. MOHAN BABU (Andhra Pradesh): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman. If you allow me, I will speak from here.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Yes.

DR. MOHAN BABU: Sir what I am going to say now regarding the Censor Board. I spoke in this august House in May, 1995. But no action, it seems, has been taken so far. This is our United Front Government and I hope the hon. Minister will take action at least now.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Information and Broadcasting to the running of the various regional offices of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in the country. What I have observed is that the different regional boards which act as advisory panels for examination of films have different rules for different regions. What is not objectionable in one region is objectionable in the other regions. In Madras, in Kerala, the rule is different, in Hyderabad, it is different and in Mumbai the rule is entirely different. In the name of objectionable scenes and dialogues, the censor's scissors seem to run quite often ruining the aesthetic sense of films.

I fail to understand why there is discrimination with regard to feature films when you have all those foreign satellite channels dishing out stuffs which exceed the limits of decency and our