

do not want to go into details and I would conclude by quoting a couplet in Urdu.

**कुछ बातों का हुस्न यही है,
दिल में रहे, पर लब पे न आए।**

Thank you very much. I am supporting both the interventions made here.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have to take the House into confidence. I have, listed before, me 11 Special Mentions and their names are coming up every day. We are not able to finish with it. If the House so agrees, we will dispense with the lunch hour and finish this work. At 2 O'clock, we have to take up clarifications on the Defence Minister's statement. I think, all the eleven Members are not here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Need to Protect the Interest of Handloom Weavers and Textile Workers

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI (TAMILNADU): Thank you, Deputy Chairperson. There is a need to take drastic steps to protect the interests of handloom and textile workers. The Supreme Court had directed the Government to reserve 22 items exclusively for the handloom sector. But the Centre has reduced the number of reserved items to eleven. Handloom weavers are fighting for their survival all over India. So, my submission is that it is high time the Centre came forward to reserve 22 items exclusively, for the handloom sector as per the directions of the Supreme Court. The direction of the hon. Supreme Court to the textile units to produce hank yarn for the stipulated requirement of the handloom industry has not been complied with. All handloom workers should be covered by the Employees' State Insurance Scheme and the Provident Fund Scheme. State-wise, special banks should be set up to give loans and grants to the weavers.

All weavers should be provided with insurance coverage of, at least, Rs. 50,000 by the Centre. The rebate on sale given by the Government is inadequate. Both the Centre and the State Government give a rebate of 10 per

cent. But the rebate is limited to pieces that cost Rs. 2000 or less. There is no reb provided to co-operatives. Further, the rebate is limited to the sale that took place in 1992-93. The ceiling should be removed and rebate should be raised to, at least, 30 per cent and it should be given on the total sale during the current year. Handloom cloth worth Rs. 100 crores is lying with the co-operative sector in Tamil Nadu and it can be sold only if the Centre takes necessary steps. Production of silk should be increased to help the handloom sector.

[The Vice Chairman (Shri Vijay Kumar Malhotra) in the Chair]

Kanjeepuram and Arani silk sarees should be introduced in potential foreign markets. We should become self-sufficient in cotton production. Old age pension should be given to all the incapacitated handloom weaver. All weavers should be provided with free dwelling units, and a scheme should be formulated for financial and social security. For your kind information, in Tamil Nadu, Thanthai Periyar, Dr. Anna, Puratchi Thalaivar, Dr. MGR and our ex-Chief Minister Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi had taken a number of steps for the uplift of workers of the handloom sector.

Sir, through you, I want to make a special mention about the textile workers. Textile mill workers are no better. More and more units of the NTC have been declared sick and the workers are facing retrenchment. A long-term revival plan of the sick units was worked out by the Ministry at a cost of Rs. 2005 crores but I don't know what happened to that project. It is reported that B.I.F.R. has been asked to defer its final decision on the light ailing subsidiaries of NTC. For your kind information, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that at least 70,000 workers of 120 sick NTC subsidiary mills in the country would be given golden handshake. Sir, through you, I want to draw the attention of the Government, particularly to NTC units located in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. In Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry fifteen NTC units have fallen sick. This is not because the units are making losses due to under-utilisation of plants or non-co-operation of workers. The units have fallen sick because of the way the working capital is provided by the holding companies. The holding companies are

charging 17 per cent interest for lending the working capital to these NTC units. Sir, the units have to pay even penal interest. Even then the working capital is not provided in sufficient quantity taking into account price-rise and cost escalation. So, through you, Sir, I want to submit to the Central Government that the holding companies should be made shareholders of NTC units rather than being money-lenders. The voluntary Retirement Scheme is being misused by the authorities. Even those who have sought voluntary retirement for various reasons are not given enough terminal benefits from the National Revival Fund meant for this purpose, hence, I urge upon the Government to take steps on a warfooting without fail to protect the (lasses all over the nation, i.e. the handloom weavers and the textile workers in the country.

Shifting of Assam Rifles from Kangla Fort, Manipur

SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH (MANIPUR): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I thank you for allowing me to raise one of the most sentimental issues of Manipur which is about shifting of Assam rifles from Kangla Fort. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Kangla is an ancient palace of Manipur. Kangla is also one of the respected religious places of Manipur. Pakhangba was the first king of Manipur. As the people of Manipur regard Pakhangba as God, hence the said palace of Kangla is treated as a sacred place. It is a religious and historical place. During the British regime,

Kangla had been occupied by the Assam Rifles and it has now become an emotional issue, that it should be occupied by Assam Rifles. The people of Manipur after independence have been demanding for the shifting of the Assam Rifles from Kangla to other places. The Government of Manipur have allotted two places which are near Imphal city, not far from the urban areas. One is Luwang Sangphum, and another is Mahakoirang. At Luwang Sangphum, the construction work has been completed. After that a new Assam Rifle battalion had been shifted in place of the existing Assam Rifle occupied at Kangla. Again, the State Government had allotted

another area of 207 acres of land at Mahakoirang and it had been handed over physically to the Assam Rifles on 3.3.93. As the vacation of the Kangla Fort by the Assam Rifles depends on the construction of a building at the new site, Mahakoirang, the State Government have completed the allotment of land, the construction of approach roads, the provision of drinking water and the electrical connections also. As a first step to shifting the Assam Rifles from the sacred place of Kangla and handing over the area to the State Government, a ceremonial departure was organised on 13.8.92 which was presided over by the then Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. M.M. Jacob now Governor of Meghalaya. But an area of approximately 25 acres within the earmarked area which comprised the ancient monuments was handed over to the State Government with an assurance that the shifting of the Assam Rifles would be complete by 31.3.96. But even now the Assam Rifles are occupying the area.

The Kangla Fort area has to be preserved as a protected area. A notification to this effect was issued on 7th October, 91 under the Manipur Ancient and Historical Monuments, Archaeological Monuments and Sites Act, 1976.

Sir, as you know, Manipur is a backward State when compared with other States. This backwardness is due to the negligence of the Central Government. Because of this negligence, nowadays the youths are becoming restless and emotional and the State is now an insurgency-ridden State. All this creates serious law and order problems in the State.

Hence, in order to remove the hurt feelings of the people of Manipur because of the forceful occupation of this religious place by the Army and to guard against the youth going away from the mainstream of the country, it is very necessary to shift the Assam Rifles from the Kangla Fort immediately. I, therefore, draw the attention of the hon. Minister, through this House, to vacate the Assam Rifles from the Kangla Fort, develop the area in the interest of the Manipuri people and to respect the sentiments of the Manipuri people.