

I, therefore, demand from the Government to suspend the recovery of loans that are due to banks and financial institutions from the farmers of Andhra Pradesh for a specific period and instruct the Uncorrected/Not for Publication-10-8-2001 banks and financial institutions to provide interest free additional loans to the farmers of the States so as to enable them to restart their agricultural activities and also release adequate Central funds to the State to face the drought situation. Thank you.

SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member.

Modernisation of Nagapattinam Port

SHRI R. KAMARAJ (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I thank you for this opportunity. Sir, I belong to Tiruvarur District of Tamil Nadu which is known for agriculture. It is surrounded by Thanjavur and Nagapattinam Districts. Nagapattinam is famous for the Nagoor Darga, and the shrine Velankanni are the places of worship for both the Muslims and the Christians, and where Hindu temples are located, the Hindus are visiting these places and living amicably. In Nagapattinam there is an ancient port which is not functioning right now. During the period from 1955 to 1985, the port was fully operational for both passenger ships and cargo ships. These activities came to a halt in the year 1990. By the closure of this port the export and import activities also came to a halt. Now the goods have to be transported to Chennai port from where these are shipped. This involves a lot of loss of time as well as money to small traders in this area. Therefore, the Chamber of Commerce of Nagapattinam District have now requested to modernise the port so that the loss could be prevented by deepening the port and permanently providing with dredger so that ships with 2000 to 3000 tonnes capacity could be operated from this port. This port is nearer to Singapore and Malaysia and there will be no problem for operating passenger/cargo ships for those countries. Therefore, I urge upon the Government to take necessary steps for modernisation of this port at the earliest.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Indian Council Of World Affairs Bill, 2000.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI JAGMOHAN): Sir, I beg to move, on behalf of my