

ment, though they were expected to do the onerous job of catering to the credit needs of the rural poor, their wages were kept much low. In many of the States, even today, the wage level of the employees of the Regional Rural Banks known as the Grameen Banks, is almost half that of commercial banks whereas they are doing almost the same type of job everywhere. Due to 12 years of agitation, the organised employees under All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association could have the Supreme Court appointment of a National Industrial Tribunal to consider their claims and their desire that their wages and service conditions should be on par with the commercial banks. In 1987, a National Industrial Tribunal was constituted. After two and a half years, that Tribunal presided over by the former Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Justice Shri Obul Reddy, has given an award on 30th of April this year. The Award was given after two and a half years of deliberations. The Justice moved about all parts of the country to find out by personal experience really what the problems are, whether really they are doing the job like commercial banks and whether their salaries should be on par with the commercial bank employees. Ultimately, he gave an award and said, yes, the Regional Rural Bank employees should be put on par with the commercial bank employees as far as their wages and service conditions are concerned. And four and a half months have passed since that Award was given. Normally, under the rules, under the laws, under the Act, within a limited time-frame the Award is to be published in the Gazette. But in this case it has not been done yet. The next question comes that when the Government's decision was that the Award of the Tribunal will be considered as final and binding on all the sides, including, of course, the Government, then where is the hesitation for the Government to publish it in a Gazette and why is the Government not lifting even a little finger to get this Award implemented? There are 70,000 Grameen Bank employees, from senior officers down to the part-time sweepers. The Award has been given. But the Government is not moving at all. Through you, Sir, I want to persuade and request and at the same time want to put

I should say, as much pressure as possible on the Government. The Deputy Minister of Finance who is looking after the Banking is here. The question is that this Award has got to be gazetted. And immediate steps should be taken for the implementation of the provisions of this Award for the benefit of the Regional Rural Bank employees, the Grameen Bank employees as they are normally called. Thank you, Sir.

Need to Convert Gopalpur Port in Orissa from Fair Weather Port to All Weather Port

SHRI BASANT KUMAR DAS (Orissa): Hon. Vice-Chairman, Sir, my Special Mention is regarding the development of Gopalpur port. This port, Sir, is situated in the Ganjam district, near the Paradeep port. This is a small fair weather port. It is estimated that one million tonnes of coal will be transported through this port. This has anchoring facilities and loading and unloading facilities. Only the offshore facilities of anchoring are there. There is no jetty and nothing of the sort, and because of that, the entire infrastructure remains operative only for 5 months. For the rest of the 7 months, the entire infrastructure remains idle, and the clearance of the coal is not made possible, the targeted amount of coal is not transported. Therefore, Sir, the Government of India, in their inter-Ministerial meeting held by the Coal Secretary on the 16th of January, 1990, decided to send a team to study the secondary port outlet near Paradeep. And they have suggested that further development of this port is required, and the investment will be around Rs. 50 crores. And if that is completed, then only the projected traffic of about 42.61 million tonnes of coal can be cleared from Paradeep port.

In this connection, I would like to point out that a company from here, Delhi, was engaged as consultants. The C.E.S. India Private Limited, New Delhi, were jointly engaged by the Asian Development Board and the Planning Commission as consultants to study the ports and the shipping sector in India. They have recommended the development of Gopalpur Port as a supplementary port to Paradip and Haldia in West Bengal, from where often the cargo

[Shri Basant Kumar Das]

is diverted to the Paradip Port, at an investment of about Rs. 40 crores, during the Eighth Five-Year Plan. However, the detailed project report prepared by the consultants, Ocean Engineering Centre, I.I.T., Madras, envisages an outlay of Rs. 107.8 crores, out of which the State Government expects Rs. 52 crores as assistance from the Asian Development Bank.

Sir, this matter has been referred to the Ministry of Finance by the Government of Orissa. The Chief Minister of Orissa has also written a DO letter to the Finance Minister. On behalf of the Government of Orissa, I am placing the matter before you, and through you, before the Government, and request that this matter may be taken up with the Asian Development Board for getting the assistance for the Gopalpur Port during the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY (Orissa) : Sir, I associate myself with this Special Mention.

Need to observe Birth Centenary of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan

SHRI MD. SALIM (West Bengal) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am raising a matter on which, I think, cutting across party lines, irrespective of party affiliation, everybody will agree.

The year 1990 is the birth centenary year of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, popularly known as Frontier Gandhi of Badshah Khan. It would be a great occasion for us to celebrate this occasion, not merely to pay homage to him, to his life and work, but also to inspired the younger generation, the youth, to follow the ideals for which he stood, such as secularism and unity.

In the present context, it will be very appropriate if we observe the birth centenary of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. We have already lost eight months of the year. I suggest that the Government of India should come forward with a plan. We should involve non-Governmental organisations also. We can commemorate his birth centenary through publications, bringing out a postage stamp, organising semi-

nars by inviting speakers from the SAARC countries, producing a film on his life and work and instituting an award for communal harmony. Of course, the Government may also consider, particularly, the Sports Authority of India, the possibility of holding a tournament, say, in hockey or football, involving the SAARC countries.

I, think, if we do so, we can also correct, to some extent, the mistake we committed in the past. Sir, he felt betrayed when the Congress accepted the proposal for partition. In the real sense, he was thrown to the wolf. Now, his birth centenary has given us an opportunity. As far as my knowledge goes, the previous Government was planning to celebrate his birth centenary in a befitting manner. Now, the new Government has come. Therefore, the Government should come forward with a plan, I repeat, involving others also. It will be a tribute to Badshah Khan. Through observance of his birth centenary we can inculcate the teachings of his life, particularly the simple and austere life he led, his organisational capability, the way he inspired people for modern education, for unity, for secularism, for unity. With these words I conclude.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM (Uttar Pradesh) : I associate myself with this.

SHRIMATI SAYEEDA KHATUN (Madhya Pradesh) : I also associate myself with this.

Serious injuries to some journalists in the police lathi-charge during anti-reservation stir in Orissa.

SHRI KANHU CHARAN LENKA (Orissa) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I want to draw the attention of this august House to the brutal attack of police on journalists in Orissa. A serious situation has arisen in the State of Orissa where the working journalists have been brutally attacked by the police. The administration has completely failed in protecting the interest of the State, interest of the people and the interest of journalists who are performing their duties.

Sir, during the anti-reservation stir in the State at least five journalists have been seriously injured. One journalist, Shri Harilal Das Gupta, staff reporter of 'Praja-