

[Dr. Nagen Saikia] a connection immediately. I would like to give the information in detail if necessary. This chaotic condition of the telephones is prevailing in the whole State of Assam and they are making money out of it.

The cables, in Guwahati and in some of the cities were laid in 1950s, but till today these cables which are in a damaged condition, have not been replaced by new ones, causing great inconvenience to the subscribers.

The development of telecommunications in Assam is not at par with, the rest of the country. Modern, sophisticated instruments are yet to be installed. Only at Tinsukia Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Silchar the electronic system has been installed with limited capacity. But in these cities also hundreds of depositors are put in queue for years together to get connections on the plea that there is no connection wire. On the whims of somebody the State is suffering from inadequate installation of telecommunication facilities in the State.

Thirdly, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that Majili, the biggest river island in the sub-division of the Jorhat District, is still waiting to get installation of telecommunications. Even the telegrams are sent to Majili through messengers.

The North-Eastern region is at a remote distance from the capital of the country, and it is surrounded by four foreign countries, namely, China, Burma, Nepal and Bangladesh. Due to inadequacy of all sorts of communications, surface communications and other communications, the region is still remaining at the same distance both geographically and psychologically.

Therefore, I would urge upon the Government to take necessary steps:

- (1) To replace the old instruments and systems with modern and sophisticated ones.
- (2) To increase the capacity in every place.

(3) To give connections to those who have been waiting after depositing the necessary amount for years.

(4) To make enquiry about corruption and about negligence of duties by a section of the employees and to take necessary steps against them.

(5) To constitute the Advisory Board at the earliest.

(6) To review the cases of wrong billing.

(7) To connect all the district headquarters with each, other at the earliest.

I hope the Government will come forward to improve the telecommunications in Assam and the whole of the North-Eastern region.

Thank you,

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI (Gujarat): I would associate myself with the hon. Member's view. He was talking about the North-Eastern region. The same situation is there in the city of Calcutta as well.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR): Mrs. Bijoya Chakravarty. Not there. Kumari Chandrika Kenia.

Sorry Plight of Shivani Devi Temple of Shivgiri Fort in Maharashtra

KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I had the good fortune of visiting the Shivgiri Fort, the very birth-place of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on the 26th April, 1990, that is the birth anniversary of Shivaji Maharaj which is celebrated in every nook and corner of Maharashtra with a big fanfare and great enthusiasm.

As you climb up the Shivgiri Fort to reach the birth place of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the top of the mountain, you are compelled to halt at the Shivaji Devi Temple on your way up for darshan of the Shivai Devi.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I was against at the plight of the said Temple which is part of the national monument of the Shivgiri Fort. It is in a dilapi-

dated condition and is likely to collapse any moment. I did make inquiries with the local people and they freely ventilated their grievances that the Central Government has been totally neglecting the temple as well as the fort and no renovation work has been done. Thousands of devotees and followers visit the Shivgiri fort & the temple every day to pay their respects to the national leader and have darshan of Shivai Devi. I regret say that the State Government has not taken up the matter with the Central Government in a serious manner. Though the hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra pays flying visits to Shivgiri every year on the 26th of April to garland the statue of Shivaji Maharaj and Vijay Mata and perform pooja in the Shivgiri temple, he has not paid much attention to renovate the temple. I would like to draw the attention of the Government through you to the sorry plight of the temple and urge the Government to take instant steps to restore the pristine glory to this most important national monument of Maharashtra and take up the work of renovation of the temple immediately. I must stress here the significance of the Shivai Devi temple to the Members of the august House and the Government by stating that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was named after Shivai Devi and it was Shivai Devi, as the folklore has it, who presented the sword of Bhawani to Shivaji to protect and safeguard Hinduism and Hindu religion as well as its culture from the attacks of foreigners.

I once again make an earnest plea to the Government to improve the dilapidated condition of the Shivai Devi temple and immediately appease the hurt sentiments of millions of people of Maharashtra who revere and worship Shivaji Maharaj and Shivai Devi temple. Annihilation of Male Members in Patola Village of Orissa

*SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VEN-KATARAMAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr.

Vice-Chairman, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to a very pathetic situation gripping the people of Pabla, a hamlet a top a hill, in Dhan-kenal district of Orissa. The people of this Village fear that soon it will come to be known as a 'Village of widows' because, during the last few years, only men have been dying mysteriously. Death is something certain and inevitable. But what causes concern is the fact that death has struck only men in the shape of fever or diarrhoea. It remains an enigma to the people. This has been reported by a local daily, 'The Samaj' last Tuesday.

Of the 50 tribals living in this hamlet only Six are men. There is an aluminium factory in Angul, a town situated at a distance of 25 Kms. People apprehend that the pollution from the factory could be the reason for this tragic situation. Some people even call this a 'Cursed Village' and say that some evil spirit is wrecking havoc. The District Collector of Dhankenal district visited the Village and made inquiries to ascertain the cause. He was told by the doctors of the hospital there that the drinking habit of the people in the cause of this phenomenon. People of this Village habitually drink toddy obtained from palm juice. Even the children have become toddy addicts.

Whatever be the reason, it is the duty of the Union Government to protect the tribal people and their descendants. So, I urge upon the Government to take necessary action on war footing to save the men folk from annihilation.

Thank you.

Need to exempt "Panchamritam" Prasad of Murugan Temple at Palani in Tamil Nadu from payment of Tax

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir in Palani, Tamil Nadu, there is a very famous temple of Lord Murugan

*English Translation of the Original speech delivered in Tamil.