

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that a letter has been received from Shri Dilip Singh Judev stating that he was admitted in AIIMS, New Delhi, for treatment. Doctors have advised him to take full rest. He has, therefore, requested for the grant of leave of absence from all the sittings of the current Session of the Rajya Sabha.

Does he have the permission of the House for remaining absent from all the sittings of the House during the current Session?

(No hon. Member dissented)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted.

I have also to inform Members that a letter has been received from Shri M.P. Abdussamad Samadani, stating that doctors have advised him to avoid journey as he had suffered subarchanoid haemorrhage and hypertension. He has, therefore, requested for the grant of leave of absence w.e.f. 19th November to 14th December, 2001 during the current Session of the Rajya Sabha.

Does he have the permission of the House for remaining absent w.e.f. 19th November to 14th December, 2001, during the current Session?

(No hon. Member dissented)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Ongoing three day's coal strike

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is reported in the Press that the Minister of Disinvestment, using the platform of CII...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please read out the text.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, I will just add one sentence. He has categorised the trade unions as obstructionists and has called them as 'weakening power'. Immediately, a day after that, the coal workers have gone on a total strike.

The massive success of coal workers' strike yesterday, has busted the claim made in CII confabulations by the Union Minister of Disinvestment day before yesterday, holding trade unions as 'obstructionists' and calling them as 'weakening power'. This is the biggest strike in the recent period, encompassing six lakh miners in the length and breadth of the country. The strike was total; and it will continue till tomorrow. I believe, hon. Ministers will, henceforth, restrain.

It brings no happiness to workers when they go on strike. The vastness of the strike has vindicated the reality that the strike was spontaneous and workers have found this call as an instrument to demonstrate their anguish against the Government policy of privatisation and deprivation. Through this strike, the coal workers demanded from the Government the immediate withdrawal of coal denationalisation Bill introduced in Parliament. Coal workers have seen from their 150 years' experience that the private regime has not provided any schools, community development projects or healthcare system. The coal workers are now convinced that the denationalisation process will not only bring distress to labour, but it will also ruin the industry.

It is a matter of shame and agony that coal workers have not been paid their earned wage arrears for the last six years. I would have been glad if the Government had responded to the sentiments of workers, which I understand are unattainable from the people who use employers' platforms against labour. However, I hope the Government will come to terms with the united trade union movement.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): I associate myself with what he has said.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA (Orissa): I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक (उत्तर प्रदेश) : सभापति महोदय, मैं अपने आपको इससे संबद्ध करता हूँ।

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Proposal to raise water level of Mullapperiyar Dam

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (Kerala): Sir, it is very reliably learnt that there is a strong move to raise the water level of Mullapperiyar Dam in Kerala from 136 feet, without considering the genuine reservation of the Government of Kerala. The proposal to raise the water level of the Dam will adversely affect the environment. The increase of water level tends to destroy the forest and wild life of the surroundings, especially the Tiger Reserve Project of Periyar in Kerala.

The Mullapperiyar Dam was constructed long back and the strength and capacity of the Dam is in doubt. The safety of the Dam is in danger. During the recent continuous monsoon, high leakage of water was found through the Dam, causing apprehension among the people.

If anything happens to the Dam, the population of Idukki, Kottayam and Ernakulam District will be totally affected and they will be devastated. All-party Conference convened by the Chief Minister of Kerala has already appealed to the Government of India not to raise the water level of Mullapperiyar Dam.

Considering all these facts, it is urged that the water level of Mullapperiyar Dam shall not be raised at any cost.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

**Release of Postal Stamp and Coin in the
memory of Maruthupandians**

SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, this is regarding the release of a postal stamp and a coin in the memory of Maruthupandians on their 200th death anniversary. Maruthupandians were the erstwhile rulers of Sivagangai land in Tamil Nadu during the 18th century. That period was called the 'The Golden Age of Sivaganga Kingdom'. According to the Indian history, the ruler had issued a proclamation against the British Rule in