

This 100-year old refractory brick making company was nationalised in 1976. The BSCL has been functioning as a unit of Burn Standard Company of Calcutta. Even now the company has orders for refractory bricks from various steel plants worth Rs.40 crores. In 1994, all the units of the company were clubbed and dubbed as loss making units, and the company was referred to the BIFR. However, since the BSCL, Salem, was a profit-making unit, in 1999-2000, it was decided to invest Rs.26 crores in the unit. But, on 14th September, 2001, saying that Burnpur and Howrah units are loss-making, the BIFR has decided to sell the company to a private sector in 90 days. It also decided to close it down in the event of absence of buyers. There is a lot of opposition in the country for closing even loss making industries. But here is the case of a profit making industry being closed down because the sister-concerns are sick. The Appellate Authority of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction has also recommended a review of the decision of the BIFR. The Delhi High Court has also directed BIFR to review its decision.

The Burn Standard Company is an old, profit-making company that provides livelihood to thousands of workers and their families besides providing sustenance to people of the area indirectly. In view of the merit of the case, I appeal to the Centre to reconsider its decision of privatising or closing down the BSCL, Salem and save the livelihood of the workers.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with this Special Mention.

SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with this Special Mention.

Fear of volcanic eruption and earthquake in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu

SHRI P. SOUNDARARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, on the 24th of November 2001, at Surndai village, 40 kms. from Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, the earth burst out emitting lava like molten fire. The liquid fire was thrown up to a height of about 6 feet through the cracked crust of earth. This fearful sight lasted for a few minutes. In the next few hours the molten fire cooled and formed layers of blackish substance. When the people, in the grip of fear, visited the spot later, they found two deep pits with billowing smoke and the area was filled with phosphorus smell. The Government of Tamil Nadu had immediately dispatched teams of experts to study this

phenomenon and to allay the fears of people. Such incidents have been occurring at Abishegappatti, Nanguneri, Thenkasi and Sengottai areas in my district, Tirunelveli, in which ISRO and INS Kottabomman are located. Even the Indo-Russian Koodangulam Atomic Power Project is being set up in this region because of the reportedly solid rock beneath the surface. It is now said by some experts that the rocks below are moving northward. It is the duty of the Centre to make a thorough study of this phenomenon so that the life of people is not exposed to danger. Any such incident around the atomic project could be disastrous.

So, I appeal to the Government to send a team of experts and determine the causes of such eruption and relieve people of their anxiety before the beginning of the construction of atomic power project at Koodankulam.

SHRI S. PETER ALPHONSE (Tamil Nadu): I associate myself with what he has said.

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza and West Bank

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Goa): India established diplomatic relations with the State of Israel in 1993 on the grounds that we would then be able to contribute in a more effective manner to the West Asia peace process. Indeed, I was the first person to establish official contact on behalf of the Government of India with Israel when, as Minister of State in the Foreign Office, I met that year the then Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, in New York.

Over the last two days, however, the Israeli airstrikes on the West Bank and Gaza have all but destroyed the peace process. The airstrikes will destroy the efforts of the international community after the 'new vision' statement of US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, for the creation of the State of Palestine.

In view of India's firm and longstanding commitment to help in the peace process, I urge the Government of India to call upon the Government of Israel to immediately halt the aggressive strikes, to call upon both parties to resume the peace negotiations on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolutions as well as the signed agreements and to finalise a time-frame for return of the Palestinian refugees, dismantling of the Israeli settlements in