

particularly, the following: (i) Widening and upgradation work of the National Highway 31 A, undertaken by the Border Roads Organisation, needs to be accelerated, and the Highway should be brought to double-lane standards at the earliest for the benefit of the people, (ii) An early sanction of an alternative Highway from Melli, along the other side of the River Teesta, to Singtam and onward to Ranipool. (iii) An early sanction of an alternative double lane highway to Gangtok from Ranipool via Ranka under the SARDP-NE Phase-A. (iv) Request to include all upgradation programme of State Highways under Phase-A of the SARDP-NE instead of Phase-B as is being considered now.

I, therefore, request the Government to take urgent and effective measures for the completion of above projects and proposals at the earliest.

SHRI SAMAN PATHAK (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with this Special Mention

#### **Demand for strict monitoring of drug prices in the country**

SHRI R.C. SINGH (West Bengal): Sir, lack of price control initiatives by Government helped drug companies to overprice their drugs and profit margins. Some medicines fetched profit of 1000%, thereby denying the common man access to affordable medicines. The Government promised that it would ensure availability of life-saving drugs at reasonable prices. Leave alone life-saving drugs, even ordinary drugs have gone out of reach of common man. Even the Prime Minister emphasized the need for regulation of drug prices. It is paradoxical that the Government of India classified 354 drugs as essential medicines, but only 32 of these 354 are under price regulation. For example, anaemia is a major problem in India, but anti-anaemia medicines are not under the Price Control Order. The same is the case with other drugs. Zoledronic acid, an anti-cancer agent, is priced at Rs. 2,800 but some companies are charging Rs. 13,900 by selectively changing some ingredients to evade price control; Orfloxacin, an antibiotic drug, is sold by one company for Rs. 110 and another company for Rs. 2,000; Clopidogrel, used for heart disease, is sold by a company for Rs. 78 and another company for Rs. 1,020.

Many countries have price control in some form or the other. The U.K. has drug price regulation scheme. Even though the U.S. has no price control, drug and insurance companies negotiate price and sell drugs within that price bracket. But, here we have absolutely no control on drug prices. Hence, I request the Government of India to immediately classify all the 354 drugs as essential drugs and include them under the Price Control Order so as to ensure that at least, the essential drugs are sold at a uniform price everywhere.

SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with it.

MS. MABEL REBELLO (Jharkhand): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

SHRI O.T. LEPCHA (Sikkim): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with it.