

many, many years. The merger between the *erstwhile* Air India and Indian Airlines has still not been successfully completed, and the employees of Indian Airlines, especially, are very unhappy. The Government needs to take urgent measures, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, to turn the Company around. Providing additional equity and loan will be only a temporary relief, but no solution. We have to find a solution to make the Company competitive. Funds will be required, of course, for aircraft acquisition. But taxpayers' monies should not be given to meet losses; there will be end to that. The Company is, probably, overstaffed, and, due to political and administrative pressures, has often succumbed to even unreasonable demands from Unions as it is afraid of facing a strike. And the Unions have reasons to complain because of interference. Costs must be reduced, if necessary, even by reducing the number of employees and rationalising their emoluments. Practice of appointing non-industry professionals as CEOs may have also contributed, Mr. Deputy Chairman, to the Company's present plight. Political and administrative interference, as I said earlier, lack of autonomy and the resulting weak work ethic is preventing the Company from successfully competing in a fiercely competitive market place where even the private companies are making losses. Urgent, corrective steps need to be taken. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

**Demand to take effective measures to tackle the malnutrition
among children in the country**

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would like to bring before this House the alarming levels of hunger in children in some States, including Tamil Nadu. The State of Tamil Nadu, once an exemplar for other States in the country in successful implementation of nutritional programmes, has now become one of the ten States in the country with alarming levels of hunger, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute's India State Hunger Index of 2008. The ratings are based on the prevalence of calorie energy deficiency, child mortality and the number of children below the age of five who are underweight. The National Family Health Survey data of 2008 show a similar trend. According to this survey, almost one-third, that is, 31 per cent, of children under the age of five in Tamil Nadu are stunted or too short for their age, which indicates that they have been undernourished. Further, seven out of every ten children below the age of five have iron-deficiency anaemia, according to the report of the National Family Health Survey. Anaemia has actually increased from 69 to 73 per cent in the age group of infancy to three from the last survey of 1998. Only 40 per cent of the households have access to adequately iodized salt and vitamin-A deficiency persists despite prevention programmes. Therefore, I urge upon the Government to view this situation seriously and implement nutritional programmes more effectively to wipe out the alarming level of malnutrition in all the States, including Tamil Nadu.

**Demand to resolve the problem of the shop-owners affected by the
elevated express way project from Chennai Port to Maduravayal**

SHRI N. BALAGANGA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, an elevated express way project from Chennai Port to Maduravayal for a distance of 17.5 kilometres has been formulated and approved by the National

Highways Authority of India. This project is envisaged as the Port Connectivity Programme under NHDP. This project is proposed for free movement of commercial traffic from Chennai Port to outside Chennai. This elevated express way starts at Chennai Port near War memorial and ends at Maduravayal NH4. This project runs along the banks of river Cooum for the entire length. I would like to point out that on the vast stretch of land along the Cooum river, there are 2,500 shops and small commercial establishments such as lathe machine shops, spare-parts, iron scrap shops, etc., are available for a length of 2,400 metres at Chindadripet and Pudupet. Sir, these shop vendors have been there for more than four decades doing petty business. No solution was found during the negotiation between the committee of the State Government officials and the affected business people. The State Government is prepared to offer a small compensation on the basis of the structural value of the shop which is not accepted by the shop owners. The shops are the only source of their bread. They demand that the Government to provide alternative place to continue their business. There is an apprehension among the 2,400 small business people that they may be left stranded by the authorities. Therefore, I appeal to the Government to come to the rescue of the poor shop owners and save them from the present crisis.

Demand to give the benefits of Debt Waiver Scheme to all farmers

SHRI P.R. RAJAN (Kerala): Sir, the relief of Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 envisaged by the Government is available only to those farmers whose loans were outstanding on 29.02.08. There are several farmers in Kerala who have repaid the dues before this date and the scheme obviously discriminates them *vis-a-vis* farmers who got the waiver. The Kerala Government has already taken up this case with the Union Government to include the farmers who have settled their dues before 29.02.08 within the purview of the scheme.

As per the scheme, the loans issued by lending institutions from 1.04.97 to 31.03.07, and overdue as on 31.12.07 which remained unpaid as on 29.02.08 is the eligible amount for relief. Before the announcement of the scheme in February 2008, the Kerala Government had ordered to implement a special collection drive programme. The farmers, in spite of their financial difficulties, responded to the call and settled their dues during the period. The poor farmers who have settled their dues during the special drive period are eligible for the benefits of the Debt Waiver Scheme announced and being implemented by the Government of India for the reasons that they settled the dues inbetween 1.02.08 and 29.02.08.

I, therefore, request the Government for sympathetic consideration of the matter and early orders. Thank you.

Demand to commemorate Bicentenary of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH (Haryana): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, India has a great tradition of honouring the national heroes and is always proud of paying homage to their memory especially on