

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. That is enough. Now, we take up the Special Mentions. Shri Lekhraj Bachani, not here. Shri Kripal Parmar, not here. Shri B.K. Hariprasad.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Need to Establish Special Economic Zone for I.T. Sector at Mangalore, Karnataka

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD (Karnataka): Sir, Karnataka has been the cradle of IT software and BPO-related ventures for a long time. The State Government and assiduously built up the infrastructure and nurtured the industry as a precursor to the cyber revolution sweeping the nation. In the process, the State has accumulated enough expertise and professional skills in IT majors whose facilities are located in Bangalore.

Keen to replicate its success in promotion of IT-related ventures, the State has now identified a few centres—Mangalore among those—for setting up Software Technology Parks. Mangalore is emerging as the new hub of software technology industry, with 18 companies accounting for an aggregate export turnover of Rs. 456 crores during 2003-2004.

Sensing the demand for additional IT hubs, Karnataka has proposed establishment of a sector-specific 'Special Economic Zone for IT Sector' at Mangalore, in a vast expanse of 508 acres with a capital outlay of Rs 49.39 crores. With infrastructure in place, the SEZ would offer 330 acres of fully developed and functional workplace for the new entrants.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

Sir, I urge the Central Government to accord its administrative approval for the project which has been proposed by the Government of Karnataka under the guidelines contained in the Foreign Trade Policy-2004-09, announced by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Concern over delay in completion of Amritsar inter-national Airport in Punjab

SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA (Punjab): Sir, to fulfil the long cherished desire, especially of the Punjabi community living abroad, the Government has decided to upgrade the Amritsar Airport to the international standard. Accordingly the required land had been acquired and infrastructure provided. The Central Government earmarked and spent crores of rupees on its

development. People living in Punjab and elsewhere in foreign countries were extremely happy to have an international airport at Amritsar for their convenience and benefit as they were wasting a lot of time and money to hire private transport from Delhi airport to reach their destinations in Punjab. Sir, it is understood that all of a sudden, due to some unknown reasons, the work on the Amritsar airport has been stopped. The delay in completing the project will definitely escalate its cost as well as causing anxiety and apprehensions in the minds of Punjabis.

I would, therefore, request the Government of India to re-start the work and remove all bottlenecks and hindrances, if any, to complete this unfinished work for early commissioning of the Amritsar international airport. Thank you.

Demand to ensure conservation of Dal and Wullar Lakes in Kashmir

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ (JAMMU AND KASHMIR): Sir, I feel extremely sorry to say that the Union Ministry of Environment has not still appreciated the urgency regarding conservation of Dal and Wullar Lakes in Kashmir.

The Ministry concerned has not responded to the nation's resolve to conserve Dal Lake as a national asset. It was in 1997 that a project was approved by the Union Cabinet for an amount of Rs. 297 crores. Some amount was released but the project, as a whole, was not implemented. Meanwhile, prices have escalated. In 2004, the Standing Committee on Science and Technology had made a categorical recommendation for providing 100 per cent funding to the Dal conservation from the Government of India. The Ministry doesn't seem to have taken any serious notice of that recommendation.

I urge upon the Ministry of Environment to immediately complete the formalities and release funds to the State Government and monitor development and conservation of Dal Lake as a national heritage.

As for Wullar Lake, the negligence of the Ministry is quite obvious. Wullar is Asia's biggest sweet water Lake and long ago it was included in Ramsar Convention. It was natural that the Ministry should fulfil commitments of the Ramsar Convention. Wullar today is a vast marshy land. A lake that once covered a space of 200 square kilometres has shrunk to just 24 square kilometres. I thought, I must raise it to seek support of this august House so that the Ministry stirs into taking urgent action.