श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान (बिहार): सर, मैं स्वयं को इस विषय से साथ सम्बद्ध करता हूं।

श्री भरतसिंह प्रभातसिंह परमार: उपसभापति महोदय, गुजरात में नर्मदा में भी बाढ़ आई है।

श्री उपसभापति: ठीक है। ..(**व्यवधान**).. Now, Shri N.K. Singh.

Foreign Exchange Amnesty Scheme to improve inward capital flow

SHRI N.K. SINGH (Bihar): Sir, the other day, the Prime Minister, while speaking on the economic situation in the country, mentioned that there was a need to adopt innovative measures for encouraging inward capital flows. In this context, I wish to make two proposals for the consideration of the Government. First, when the hon. Prime Minister was the Finance Minister in 1991, he had taken an innovative step of what was called the "Foreign Exchange Remittance Scheme." That Scheme, which was introduced in 1991, gave two kinds of immunities–the immunity against the tax and the immunity against the application of the Foreign Exchange Management Act. I think the time is appropriate to consider an innovative step of this kind in which it would encourage NRIs and Indians to be able to bring inward capital flows based on the same kind of a Scheme which we had in 1991. I would like to recall that at that time the Scheme, which continued for about eight months or so, did manage to receive close to 800 million dollars which really, at that particular point of time, was rather a substantial sum of money.

In this connection, Sir, the second kind of a proposal which has been under consideration of the Government is a Gold Amnesty Scheme. Everybody knows that India is a repository of vast sums of gold which are here. Different Governments have tried to have a gold scheme. The Reserve Bank of India had given a report long ago on what they wanted. They wanted a Gold Statutory Board. I think that the Government, along with the Foreign Exchange Remittance Scheme, can consider some innovative measures for a gold scheme which can harness the locked-up, enormous amount of gold which is in this country. At the same time, this will really also prevent the large amount of gold which is coming in, if the gold within the country can be harnessed really in an imaginative way. So, I think, a combination of both the Foreign Exchange Remittance Scheme and a gold scheme will help us tide over the growing Current Account Deficit and help us buttress Government's effort to improve inward capital flows. Thank you.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

DR. YOGENDRA P. TRIVEDI (Maharashtra): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T. (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by the hon. Member.

Plight of nurses working in private hospitals

DR. T.N. SEEMA (Kerala): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir. I would like to draw the attention of this House towards the sorry plight of thousands of nurses working in private hospitals in various parts of the country. This issue has been raised in this House many times by many Members, including the hon. Deputy Chairman. Sir, the largest number among these nurses is from Kerala. We know that nurses are not being paid minimum wages in most of the private hospitals. They are compelled to sign vouchers for an inflated amount but are paid a very meagre amount and exploited continuously. Many private hospitals are exploiting patients with huge fees and, at the same time, they are treating nurses as slaves.

Sir, there are no guidelines to protect and safeguard the interests of nurses in different States. Difficult working conditions, low salary, slow promotion, lack of job security and related benefits, increased risk of sexual harassment at the workplace are some of the problems.

The nurses are unable to repay the huge loans taken from banks and private agencies at the time of joining the colleges. There is a report that more than 40,000 nurses in Kerala are facing confiscation from banks. As hon. Members are aware, there are many instances of suicides by nurses and their family members.

Sir, the nurses' associations had approached the Union Government and the courts to give direction to all the States to ensure that hospitals did not resort to these practices in future. Even though some directions were given, these are not followed. Now, the hon. Supreme Court, three days back, sent notice to the Centre and State Governments on a petition regarding this.