

the Fourth Estate and ensured smooth functioning of the newspaper industry. But, Sir, there is a proposal on the part of employers and the Government to do away with the Wage Boards. The media fraternity in our country has been opposing the proposal to do away with the Wage Boards and agitating for the setting up of a Wage Board.

Therefore, Sir, it is urged that the Government of India should take urgent steps to set up a Wage Board to revise the wages of the journalists and non-journalists in newspaper industry.

Sir, I would like to mention one thing more here that the journalists, especially, the Kerala Union of Working Journalists, are holding a Parliament March today to press their demand. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, that has been disallowed. ...*(Interruptions)*...That has been disallowed. ...*(Interruptions)*...Please don't try to ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: I would like to seek a response from the Government. ...*(Interruptions)*...I am seeking a response from the Government in respect of this matter.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, I would also like to associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : सर, मैं अपने आपको इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करती हूँ।

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI (Kerala): Sir, I would also like to associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

Demand for interlinking of rivers of the country

SHRI C. PERUMAL (Tamil Nadu): Sir, my Special Mention is regarding linking of rivers. India is a sub-continent. It has many States. Diverse culture, tradition and beliefs are followed here. There are hundreds of languages that are spoken here. Yet, we have unity in diversity.

In our country, there are many large and perennial rivers. There are also many large rivers which are not perennial. Besides, there are innumerable small rivers. Every year, we see that there are floods in many parts of the country and drought in other parts. The Government is

spending a large amount for flood and drought relief every year. But, no permanent solution has been thought of.

In fact, there has been a demand for linking of inter-State rivers since long back. At that time, the estimated cost of project was about Rs. 50,000 crores. But, now due to escalation in cost and general trend of increase in prices of many commodities, the estimate may run over to more than Rs. 2,00,000 crores. Nevertheless, linking of rivers will be a long-term solution, and it will obviate annual recurring expenditure on account of floods and drought. This will also solve long-pending inter-State river disputes.

It may be re-called that a task force under the chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhu was set up during the previous Government in this matter. The task force recommended linking of inter-State rivers. In fact, the present Government has given a commitment to the Supreme Court that the matter will be given serious consideration.

In the circumstances, I strongly demand that inter-State rivers should be linked on a war footing and, if necessary, necessary funds may be obtained from the World Bank for this purpose.

श्री रुद्रनारायण पणि (उड़ीसा) : सर, मैं अपने आपको इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra): Sir, I would like to associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

Concern over loss of lives on National Highways

SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT (Maharashtra) : Sir, I am raising an issue of vital importance avoidable miseries to innocent people caused due to loss of lives, infliction of injuries and damage to movable properties throughout the country.

It is a common scene that long iron rods, triangular irons, wooden logs, iron and wooden strips, etc. are transported in trucks, tempos, bullock cart, and tractors on National Highways. Also common is the scene of cars, public transport vehicles, motorcycles and scooters ramming into them accidentally, with serious consequences. There are numerous incidents of this nature but most of them are settled without bringing the culprits to book, and numerous such cases go unreported.

There are specific provisions for movement of such items, which require that certain safety measures be taken; these are often not followed.