

for them to start a business on their own as the cost involved even in starting a petty business is quite high. Even if a goldsmith is able to start a business of his own, the problems are many. Some of them are as follows:

1. Introduction of modern machinery.
2. Competition with big businessmen in the industry.
3. Harassment by police.

The police are harassing the goldsmiths like anything. To escape from police custodial treatment, the thieves arrested in theft cases, identify some innocent smiths to whom, they say, they have sold the stolen jewels.. In certain cases, ignorant purchases of jewels by a smith also provide the police an opportunity to harass them without conducting a proper enquiry. The police conduct search of the premises of those people and arrest the innocent smiths in false fabricated cases.

I, therefore, take this opportunity to request the Government to make necessary amendments to the existing Gold Control Act, 1963 and authorize a certain category of police officers to enquire into cases where the poor goldsmiths are involved, considering the facts placed above.

Sir, I want to make a request. I would like to place on the Table of the House a book concerning the problems of goldsmiths. If you permit, I would place it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you cannot do that.

Safe drinking water problem and need for checking quality of water being sold in Jars, Sachets, etc.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity, and I am grateful to my leader, a great visionary, Shri Nara Chandra Babu Naidu, who has sent me to this august House. In 1994, when I was elected for the first time to the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, my first official appearance was in your presence, when Your Excellency visited my constituency, Wanaparthy in Mahaboob Nagar district, as Governor of Andhra Pradesh, to start Satya Ashrams.

Sir, today, I rise to make a Special Mention on the plight of the people of our country in getting safe drinking water.

In most parts of our country, the people are facing safe drinking water problem, more particularly, in rural areas. This is more severe during summer season, as the sources are drying up; and the plight of the people cannot be explained in words.

Since there is a drinking water crisis throughout the country, people are getting accustomed to buying sealed water bottles and sachets sold in every nook and corner of the country.

Only the affluent and health-conscious people can afford it as its prices are on par with milk prices. However, with no mechanism to check the quality of this kind of water, people may end up endangering their health.

Although there are about 2,500 bottling plants in the country, only the multinational companies are getting the advantage of this more than Rs. 1,000 crore business.

More than hundred brands of water are being sold in jars and sachets. Most of them do not conform to the ISI standards. The formula adopted for preparing the so-called mineral water should be standardized; and it should also be ensured that skilled workers are available in the plants to analyse and ensure that only standardized water is bottled, which is totally sterilized for human consumption.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to direct the Prevention of Food Adulteration Department, in each State, to test all packaged drinking water to ensure that they are purified and disinfected so as to make them fit for human consumption, especially, the 20-litre jars, which are used at all public functions throughout India and consumed by lakhs of people daily.

An early action in the matter will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with what Mr. Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddy has stated.

[9 May, 2002]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I also associate myself with what Mr. Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddy has stated.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Goa) : Sir, I also associate myself with what Mr. Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddy has stated.

Second International Airport at Chennai

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation had put up a proposal to the Ministry of Civil Aviation for construction of a new international airport at Chennai. The main objective of the proposal was the development of an airport hub for South India. It was done after arriving at the air traffic projections for the next 20 years, thereby justifying the proposal for developing the airport through private participation. A detailed proposal in this regard has already been sent to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, for giving "in principle" approval so as to take up the second phase which includes activities like master planning, recommendation on institutional structure, land acquisition, etc.

The Government of India informed us that the Union Cabinet had already decided to restructure the airports in metropolitan cities, including Chennai, as world-class airports on a long-term lease basis. The decision to lease the airports on a long-term basis to the private operators would jeopardize the efforts of the State Government to have a new international airport at Chennai. Further, this project has a better chance of implementation on a BOO/BOOT basis, without recourse to Government funds. Unless this proposal is cleared, I am afraid, Tamil Nadu will stand to suffer in the competition from the neighbouring States in attracting foreign direct investment in industrial projects.

I humbly request the Government to accord "in principle" approval to the new international airport proposal of the Tamil Nadu Government, and drop the Airports Authority of India's proposal to lease out the Chennai airport on a long-term basis, and render justice. Thank you.

Serious drinking water problem in Karnataka

SHRI M.V. RAJASHEKARAN (Karnataka): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to make this Special Mention and draw the