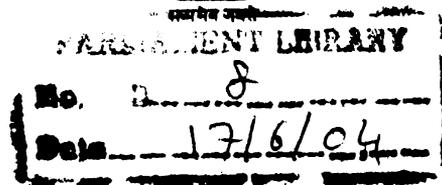


LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Fourteenth Session (Part II)
(Thirteenth Lok Sabha)



(Vol. XXXIX contains Nos. 1 to 5)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, February 3, 2004/Magha 14, 1925 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

(Interruptions)

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of two of our former colleagues, namely, Dr. Prabhat Kumar Mishra and Shri M. Arunachalam.

Dr. Prabhat Kumar Mishra was a Member of the Eighth Lok Sabha from 1984 to 1989 representing the Janjgir Parliamentary constituency of Madhya Pradesh, which is now in Chhattisgarh.

A medical practitioner and agriculturist by profession, he was President, *Chhatra Nagrik Samiti*, Mungeli, Bilaspur; and District Reorganisation Committee, Mungeli. He was also a Member of the *Shola Vikash Samiti* of all schools of Mungeli; and Rajyastar Bhoomi Vikas Committee, Bhopal. He also served as Director, *Rajyastar Bhoomi Vikas Bank*, Bhopal and *Bhoomi Vikas Bank*, Bilaspur.

A devoted social worker he was also a Member of the *Bhoodan Committee*, Mungeli.

He worked relentlessly for promoting communal harmony and provision of drinking water facilities in villages and free medical aid to the poor. He was also involved in the promotion of folk art and culture and development of villages through "*Shramdar*".

A sports enthusiast, Dr. Mishra organised many sporting events at village level.

Dr. Mishra passed away on 11 January, 2004 at Mungeli, Bilaspur at the age of 67.

Shri M. Arunachalam was a Member of the Sixth to Eleventh Lok Sabhas from 1977 to 1997 representing the Tenkasi Parliamentary constituency of Tamil Nadu.

Shri Arunachalam was an able administrator who served in the Union Council of Ministers from September

1985 to December, 1989; from June, 1991 to April, 1996 and again from June 1996 to March, 1998. He held important portfolios in the Union Cabinet.

Shri Arunachalam, who was an advocate and agriculturist by profession, joined politics at an early age. As a devoted social worker, he worked relentlessly for the upliftment of the downtrodden and the weaker sections of the society.

An active parliamentarian, Shri Arunachalam served as a Member of the Parliamentary Committee on Subordinate Legislation and the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. During 1990-91, he was a Member of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Shri M. Arunachalam passed away on 21 January, 2004 at Chennai at the age of 60.

We deeply mourn the loss of these friends and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed souls.

11.04 hrs.

*The Members then stood in silence
for a short while.*

11.05 hrs.

RULING BY THE SPEAKER

[English]

Re: Propriety of (I) Terming 'Vote-on-Account' as 'Interim Budget' In the Order Paper of the Day; and (II) Convening of the Session of the Year on 29 January, 2004 without the Presidential Address

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bilpur) : Sir, I have given notice on a very important issue. I would like your kind permission to raise it.

MR. SPEAKER : Before you speak, let me remind the House that, in the Business Advisory Committee, it was decided that we would start today with the presentation of the Budget at 11 o'clock and after the Budget, we would be taking up the 'Zero Hour' at 12 noon. I would request the hon. Members that their issues are no doubt important ones and, therefore, I would be definitely taking up their issues, the issues which Shri Dasmunsi and Shri Somnath Chatterjee want to raise, during the 'Zero Hour'. Both the issues can be discussed by giving priority in the 'Zero Hour'.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : Sir, my issue is regarding the Budget itself. It cannot be taken up after the presentation of the Budget. It is on the very constitutional matter pertaining to the procedure of the House. . . .*(Interruptions)* It is not a 'Zero Hour' issue. It is on the procedure of the House. I am on a point of order. . . .*(Interruptions)* Here, I would like to get the position rectified. . . .*(Interruptions)* My issue is not a 'Zero Hour' issue. It is linked with the very presentation of the Interim Budget and my point of order should be taken up first and disposed of. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I am on the very validity of this Session. I am raising the question of constitutionality of this Session which is going on here.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Somnath Chatterjee, this issue was discussed a few days back. The same issue which you want to raise now was raised in the House and the Minister had replied to it. And since it was once taken up.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, there is a judgement of a court of law which clearly states it. If it is upheld, then the proceedings will become null and void. . . .*(Interruptions)* Let me formulate it. My point is on the constitutionality of this very Session. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I do not deny the importance of the questions which you want to raise. I have also read your point of order which you want to raise today. But the only

thing is, we have already decided that the presentation of the Budget will be taken up at 11 a.m.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The whole order of procedure is wrong. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : If the Government has no objection, I may permit them to speak.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM (Thanjavur) : Sir, I would like to raise a very important matter. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I will permit you during the 'Zero Hour'.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The point of order will require a discussion and that may take longer time. Therefore, I will give you the fullest opportunity to present your views during the 'Zero Hour'.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur) : No, Sir. Our point is -on the presentation of the Budget itself. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. You may be brief and present your point.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, this is Parliament. Nobody can take the Parliament for a ride violating the Constitution, violating the rules and violating the established conventions of the House.

Sir, in today's Order Paper, it is stated as 'Interim Budget' Now, article 112 of the Constitution makes it clear that there can be three financial statements. The first is the Annual Statement, the second is the Vote on Account and the third is the Supplementary Demands or Demands for Excess Grants. The Constitution does not say anything called the Interim Budget. . . .*(Interruptions)*

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Sir, these things have been decided earlier. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I have permitted him to speak on his point of order.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Rule 204 categorically states 'Presentation of Budget.' We know that today is not the presentation of the Budget. Rule 213 says that the presentation of Budget may be in two parts, namely, part I and part II. Rule 214 says about the Vote on Account. We all know what is Vote on Account. Nobody may teach us or preach sermons. Today's Order Paper says 'Interim Budget'. Practice and Procedure of Parliament by Kaul and Shakhder says that, under Vote on Account, new services cannot be included to be charged from the Consolidated Fund of India except in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, besides the rules that I quoted, I would like to refer to page 719 of Practice and Procedure of Parliament by Kaul and Shakhder. There it is very clearly said as to what is a Vote on Account.

In page 720, it says :

"As the purpose of a vote on account is to keep the Government functioning, pending the voting of the final supply, it cannot normally be used as a means to obtain Parliament's approval for "new services"."

Finally, it says that even for "new services" money can be given from the Contingency Fund of India even at a time when the Lok Sabha is in Session.

It says :

"It is for the Government to decide in what cases it would be necessary to withdraw advance from the Contingency Fund for expenditure on a "New Service" when the Lok Sabha is in Session. As far as possible, before such withdrawal is made, the concerned Minister may make a statement on the floor of the House giving details of the amount and the scheme for which money is needed. In emergent cases, however, . . ."

Now, you have to justify, according to the rules, as to what is the emergency now. Is there any foreign invasion? Is the country facing any serious natural calamity? Or is the country faced with any drought situation or will a

drought situation prevail after two months? What is the emergency now?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not only this. According to the rules, one of the duties of the Standing Committees, which you have composed, is to scrutinise the Budget. Here, I would like to quote the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

In page 124, at rule 331G, it is said :

"the Committee shall consider the Demands for Grands of the concerned Ministries during the aforesaid period:"

If any additional item is included or removed in respect of any Ministry's head in the Interim Budget, which has been voted already in the earlier Budget, it should be referred to the Standing Committee again for scrutiny and it should give a Report to the House.

If the House rises on 5th and the Session is over, how will the Standing Committees have a chance to discuss the Budget? Besides this, in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, at rule 219, page 82, it is said like this. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : How do you know what is there in the Interim Budget? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I am talking on the subject of rules. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : How does he know as to what is there in the Budget? . . .(Interruptions) If there is something in the Budget, then you can raise it. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : You have already said it in the Press. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : How do you know it? Then, you are anticipating something. How do you know what is there in the Budget? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in rule 219, about the Finance Bill you have said :

"At any time after the introduction in the House of a Finance Bill, the Speaker, may allot a day or days.

[Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi]

jointly or severally, for the completion of all or any of the stages involved in the passage of the Bill. . . ."

You have to fix a date to discuss the Finance Bill. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Business Advisory Committee has finalised only two slots. One slot is to discuss the Demands for Grants in respect of Railways. In the case of Railways, it was not Interim Budget. But in the case of General Budget, you have treated it as an Interim Budget. The word 'Interim' is not there either in the Constitution or in the rules book.

According to established constitutional procedures, only three Statements can be made. First one is on the direction of the President, which is Budget. That you have tactfully avoided. Shri Somnath Chatterjee will deal with that. Second is the Vote on Account. You are not saying that it is Vote on Account, because you are careful that in Vote on Account you cannot include new services unless there are some exceptional and emergent situations. You cannot explain 'emergency', except saying that you have to go to elections and get votes. That is your 'emergency'. . . .(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK) : You are afraid of that. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : We are not afraid. We are very happy. We will soon get rid of you. . . .(Interruptions) Now, you have allotted two days. The last day is for other business. So, how will the House discuss Finance Bill clause-by-clause, including cut motions?

This was how we thought of it. Even if the House could sit for another few days to discuss it in depth, the heavens will not fall. The Government has taken the whole Parliament for a ride that whatever it will do, we will support it; whenever it comes to the House in a manner it wants, we will support it. . . .(Interruptions) This is not genuine.

Sir, you are not only presiding over the House but you are presiding over the destiny of the Indian democracy in

Parliament. This is now they are behaving and this is how they are doing it.

The hon. Minister asked me : "How do you know what is coming up in the Budget?" He said it as if the Ministry respects Parliament and it declares all the sops on the floor of the House without going to the media ten days before calling the Parliament. This is why I object to it. The words "Interim Budget" are improper. It is not in consonance of the Constitution and the Rule Book. If it is an Interim Budget with all new services, all the Demands for Grants as entered in the respective demand should be sent to the Standing Committee to make proper scrutiny. Otherwise, they are insulting the authority of the President of the Republic by using the expression "Interim Budget." Mr. Minister, you are by-passing the Parliament; you are deliberately ignoring the provisions of the Constitution. Therefore, Sir, I need your ruling in this matter. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, I have a point of order to raise.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you on the same point of order?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I am on a different issue. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (Calcutta North West) : Sir, I want to mention one thing.

MR. SPEAKER : What do you want to mention? His point of order is before us.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : I will speak only for a minute. I want to be clarified by Shri Dasmunsi. He said that the particular words "Interim Budget" do not appear in the Constitution. The point is that the very word "Budget" itself does not appear in any part of the Constitution. It is also to be clarified whether the word "Budget" appears in the Constitution. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : You have not gone through the Rule Book. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : It is mentioned that a statement of accounts would be laid. So, the word "Budget" does not appear even in the Constitution.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : What the Constitution says is of the Annual Financial Statement, the Rule Book says, it is "Budget." There are no words like "Interim Budget." . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the matter is clear for him.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : As I said earlier, the word "Budget" does not appear in the Constitution anywhere. It says of the statement of accounts. These are the particular words used in the Constitution. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I would like to add one thing here. The Constitution says of the Annual Financial Statement, Vote on Account and the Supplementary Demands. Mr. Law Minister, I may not be a lawyer like you. But I have also learnt law. The law is derived from the Constitution. The law of Parliament is the Rule Book. It is derived from the Constitution. Please read that word "Budget" mentioned in the Rule Book. Please do not look at it blindly. This is how you always misled the court and the Parliament. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to raise a basic and fundamental question about the Constitutional validity of these proceedings.

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : How long will it be stopped. Can in the presentation of the Budget be stopped in this way. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : They are not feeling comfortable with the budget. . . .(Interruptions) They will not be ask to go to the public. They will not be able to win even 50 seats are as such they are not feeling comfortable. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Sir, please fix the time for the point of order too.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You are already looking good. Why are you upset? . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : You are not a fundamentalist!

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I certainly concede it.

[Translation]

Why do you make a noise. . . .(Interruptions) Tell him that nomination would be provided. Now you sit down.

[English]

I am not ever questioning the undoubted authority of the hon. Prime Minister to recommend the dissolution of the House earlier than the scheduled time. He has already met the hon. Rashtrapati in this matter as we come to see in the newspapers because the Opposition is never taken into confidence.

Secondly, we are not afraid of elections. Let elections come. I do not have to go to advertise in the newspapers for the purpose of getting votes.

There is a specific provision. I am reading the Constitution of India. Please tell them the importance of this Book. It says :

"At the commencement of the first session after each general election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first session of each year, the President shall address both Houses of Parliament."

Sir, may I have your kind attention?

MR. SPEAKER : I am drawing the attention of the Minister.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Please ask them to listen peacefully because I know that they will be shouting soon and they will not allow us to do anything. Kindly see this. You have been involved in this matter. The Presiding Officer of the House has taken a certain decision, according to me – I submit it with all humility and respect – contrary to the clearest provisions of the Constitution of India. Kindly read this. Kindly take this page. . . . (Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Do not charge the hon. Speaker.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia, U.P.) : He has not mentioned anything. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Kindly see article 87 of the Constitution of India. It says :

"At the commencement of the first session after each general election of the House of the People,"

this does not apply now,

"and at the commencement of the first session of each year, the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons."

The question is very simple. Is this the first session of this Year? . . . *(Interruptions)* This is not your astrology. This is something else.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : This is formal education which I want to import it to him.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I know that I have upset you. This is the summons that we have got this time from the Secretary General. It says :

"I have the honour to inform that under Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Speaker has directed that the Lok Sabha, which has adjourned *sine die* on 23rd December, 2003 will resume its sittings at New Delhi on Thursday, 29th January, 2004."

Therefore, there is the clearest statement. It is a fact that it was adjourned *sine die* on the 23rd December last year. Ordinarily and certainly, if it was in the middle of the year, there was no question about it. If it was adjourned during the Winter Session or the Monsoon Session, nobody would raise a question. The question is this. Why did the Constitution provide that before the first session, the President must address the House? What does "first session" mean? The first session will mean first in point of time. This is creating some amusement even in the mind

of the esteemed colleague the hon. Finance Minister who is going to commit an outrage soon. May I read this which is a Bible to this Government? It is a U.S. Publication called Black's Law Dictionary. . . . *(Interruptions)*

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : After Das Kapital, you are now referring to this!

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What can I do when I find this jamboree here? . . . *(Interruptions)*

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Please refer to your Bible and *Quran*. Do not refer to it.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I will read the *Quran*.

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : What happened in the Leaders' meeting? Why did you object to it there?

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please take your seat.

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : When all the points have been decided in the business Advisory Committee, in the leaders meeting, then what are you saying here. There it was decided that Budget would be presented at 11.00 o'clock.

Now, wasting the time of the House has no meaning at all. When 11.00 A.M. was decided, then what more you want to say here.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Mr. Law Minister, let me make my submission now.

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : What was your leader doing there? Did you leader accept there?

[Translation]

'When in the meeting it was decided that Budget would be presented at 11.00 A.M., then what more you want to say here.

SHRI PRAKASH PARANJPE (Thane) : If you do not accept what has been decided in the Advisory Committee then Advisory Committee be abolished.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Probably, you have advised him wrongly. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have requested the hon. Members to be brief.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What is the meaning of the words 'first session'? . . .(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing the Constitution of India, not the Business Advisory Committee, which is much more fundamental than any other decision. No one in this country can ignore or override the Constitution of India. I do not have to say this, but I have to because of the interruptions that are coming in. Nobody can do that.

Sir, what is the meaning of the words 'first Session'? It is very well recognised. At least, our esteemed Law Minister will know it and he has been following it. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, he will not follow anything decided in the Business Advisory Committee. What is this? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Paighat) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is happening here? You have allowed Shri Somnath Chatterjee to speak. Why is he objecting to it? . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I would request the hon. Members to listen to Shri Somnath Chatterjee who is on a point of order. The point of order is on the procedure to be followed in the House. I am there to reply and I am there to give a ruling on the issue. Let the other Members not disturb him. I have also requested both the Members to be very brief. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi adhered to it and he was very brief. I would request Shri Somnath Chatterjee also to be very brief and complete his submission quickly. I would request hon. Members not to disturb him because we have to go to other important business as early as possible.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, my strength is not the time I take because of the importance of the issue.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I was reading one of the most recognised legal dictionaries which says: "A Session is the whole space of time from its first assembly to its prorogation or adjournment *sine die*". This is very clear. A Session can be put an end to by prorogation or by adjourning it *sine die*, as this authority has said. A gap of six months is the provision that is made in article 85 between one Session and the next Session. Otherwise, it is not possible to say simply that it was kept adjourned *sine die*, and so we can go on extending the time. Ordinarily, as I said, under Rule 50, if there is no constitutional bar or a constitutional requirement, certainly the Speaker can resume the sitting by issuing a notice, if it was any other Session

Sir, now, I submit, at this point of time, this is the first Session of this year because the earlier Session was adjourned *sine die*. That Session came to an end. So, this is the first Session of this year. There is no concept of a continuing Session in the first Session of the new year. You cannot say that I am dividing it by saying that I have adjourned it *sine die*. Now, in point of time, this is a new Session and the first Session. The words used are not 'new Session'. The Constitution makers did not say that only a 'new Session' will require an Address by the hon. Rashtrapatiiji. The significant words are : 'first Session'

Now, what is the effect if there is a violation of this article? The matter is not *res integra*. It has been decided by the judgement of the Calcutta High Court as early as in 1966 that if there is a violation of this rule, the entire proceedings are unconstitutional and the Practice and Procedure of Parliament by Kaul and Shakhder is approving this. They have referred to this book of Kaul and Shakhder as an authority for the proposition that without an Address by the President, it will be illegal and unconstitutional. At page no. 167 of Practice and Procedure of Parliament by Kaul and Shakhder, there is a reference to the case of the State Legislature. So, the article referred there is article 176 and the relevant article here is article 87. It is said that if a Legislature meets and transacts legislative business without the mandatory provision of an Address by the Governor when required

[Shri Somnath Chatterjee]

under article 176, its proceedings are illegal and invalid and may be questioned in a court of law and precisely that happened. There was a case before the Calcutta High Court whether the Governor of West Bengal did address the first Session of the Assembly or not.

It was held that, factually, he did. But it was very clearly held in that judgement about any non-compliance with the mandatory provisions. The words are: 'shall address' and not 'may'. It does not depend on the decision of any particular dignitary howsoever high position he is occupying. Therefore, it says:

"If it is established that President did not address or Governor did not address, although he was required to do so, the whole proceedings will be unconstitutional and illegal."

That is my submission. The first session is this session because it has been called after the adjournment sine die of the earlier session. There is no pending session. There is no question of a pending session in the new year. There is no question of language. It is not a new session. It cannot be said that the earlier session has not ended. Therefore, it is a new session.

It is a question of first session. Therefore, my submission is this. As a first session, which has purported to commence here without the address by the President of India, and the Constitution wants it in the beginning of the year, the President must tell the country through the Parliament as to what are the policies and programmes of the Government. They have not done it. Therefore, it is the grossest violation of the Constitution of India. It is a wholly unconstitutional sitting that is going on. Therefore, I am not going into the Budget. People know what is in the Budget. Another Rs. 40,000 crore will be doled out. It has not been actually done but promised to be doled out. Ultimately, nothing will happen because they will not be there to implement it. . . .(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this outrage on the Constitution be stopped here and now. That is my demand.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, I shall be very brief. I endorse all that Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said. In

article 87, the most important words are 'shall' and 'the first session'. If I am allowed, I will read it again:

"At the commencement of the first session of each general election to the House of the people, at the commencement of the first session of each year, the President shall address. . ."

Now this is the first session of this year. . . .(Interruptions)
I did tell the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs that her fluency in language will not overcome the logic of the law and the technicalities involved in it. You are a witness to that, Sir.

It says about 'the first session of each year'. Is this not the first session of this year? . . .(Interruptions) Shri Somnath Chatterjee has very correctly pointed out that a *sine die* adjourned session is also the first session of this year. If this is the first session of the year, article 87 makes it mandatory on the Government to see that the President of India addresses that session. The President of India did not address this session. This session is the first session, Sir.

Moreover what kind of trick has the Government played on the Parliament? I will read out from page 167 of 'Practice and Procedure of Parliament' by Kaul and Shakhder. It says:

"The President in exercising the power to prorogue the House acts on the advice of the Prime Minister."

The President has to prorogue the House on the advice of the Prime Minister. It is the Executive that forwards the letter to the Speaker. The Speaker forwards the letter to the President. I must submit that the Speaker has a minimum role in this. The most important role that is played is by the Executive. It is by the Prime Minister who has to send a letter to the President for prorogation. Why has the Prime Minister not sent the letter to the President? We are told on the floor of the House by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister herself that they had decided to hold the election. That is why they did not write a letter to the President.

This is a confession. This is an admission given on the floor of the House.

Now, if they were deciding to hold the election, they could have prorogued this House. This House could have been addressed by the President and after the President addresses, the President's Address would have been discussed on the floor of the House. The President's Address would have shown to the people and to the Members about their performance and we would have criticised them. This opportunity is not allowed to the Members sitting on the Opposition Benches. Is this not colourable exercise of law?

The constitutional law provides that in the first session the President has to address both the Houses. In order to avoid the Address by the President, the Prime Minister or the Head of the Executive is not writing to the President. This is exactly using the law in order to defeat the law. The law is very clear. It says the first session, not a session when it is held after the prorogation. The dictionary says and the courts also will say that the first session is first session. This is the first session simply because it is a continuation, simply because it was sine die adjourned and it was not prorogued, this does not lose the character of the first session of the year. If this is the first session of the year, if this session is not addressed by the President, then everything done is illegal and that is according to the ruling given by the Calcutta High Court and this can be challenged in the court of law. Why should it be done? Anybody can go to the court of law and challenge it. The court of law can be told that the Government is giving the sops through advertisements without coming to the Parliament and the Budget is presented and it is discussed only for two days and the President Address is not given and the Members are not allowed to discuss the President's Address. Is this not a colourable exercise of the law by the Government itself? If it is there, we seek your ruling on this point.

I am just pointing out the issues on which the ruling in given. Is this the first session of the year or not? . . . (Interruptions) Is this the first session of the year or not? I am underlining. I am defining. I do not want to put you it in an embarrassing position. The prorogation is the responsibility of the Government, but giving a decision whether this is the first session of the year or not is your

responsibility. We would like to seek from you whether it is the first session of this year or not. If this is the first session of the year, was it incumbent on the President to address the House or not?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether the Budget being termed as an interim Budget by the Government is an interim Budget or the last Budget of the present Lok Sabha?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Athawale, they have not asked the ruling from you. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Athawaleji, If you come to my Chamber, I will tell you. . . . (Interruptions)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this was done once in 1962 prior to the elections the session was recommend white the House was not prorogued. That session was called in accordance with article 87(1) of the Constitution but this year the Government have been making plan and as such they have thrown the relevant Constitutional provision overboard. In the resulting state of utter confusion, the Government, want to hoodwink the people by taking recourse to propaganda. . . . (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government have violated the right of the His Excellency, the President of India. As per particle 87(1) of the constitution, His Excellency, the President of India has the right to call the first session and in every election year, President's Address has been there but there would be only one President's Address in the election year 2004. The second one would not be there. The Government have made a departure from this tradition.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, you can speak now.

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not know since when Raghuvansh Babu has become a person with deep insight? . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether it is an interim budget or a final budget. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a final budget for the hon'ble Member, but an interim budget for us.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I am going to speak, what I am going to show and what I am going to read out, has already become a subject of discussion here in anticipating. I had thought that once it has been decided in the Business Advisory Committee meeting; today we would start the day right with the presentation of the budget. But here two constitutional questions have been raised. One question has been raised by Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi that from where this word interim budget has come. This word is neither available in the constitution nor in the rule book. From where this word has been coined by us. Dasmunsi, you have got only one objection that why have we termed it as an interim budget. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : My objection is not over the word interim budget. I have said that if in the vote-on-Account, new service Charge has been provided in favour of different departments. . . .

[*English*]

that should also go to the Standing Committee.

[*Translation*]

This is what the Rule book says.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, details of Budget proposals will be known only when Minister of Finance will rise to speak. His objection is on the term of 'Interim Budget' as to how this term has been used when this term is mentioned neither in the

Constitution nor in the Rule Book. I think I do not need to go into its logic, rather I would like to cite two examples – the one belongs to his tenure while the other is ours. During 1996-97 when Shri Shivraj V. Patil was Presiding Officer, the language used by the then Finance Minister Sardar Manmohan Singh was I quote,

[*English*]

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to present the Interim Budget for 1996-97".

[*Translation*]

Now, I read out the language used by Shri Yashwant Sinha when he was the Finance Minister during 1998-99.

[*English*]

Sir, I rise to present the Interim Budget for 1998-99."

[*Translation*]

Now I need not mention any other thing.

So far as the contention of Shri Somnath Chatterjee is concerned, he was not present here on 29th instant. This question was raised in the house. Shri Radha Krishnanji might have been sitting here at that time. This question was raised here by the Senior most Member and Shri Shivraj Patil deliberated upon the subject extensively. What Raghuvansh Babu has submitted today was submitted by him even on that day. Comrade Pal who spoke on your behalf, had also putforth his views earlier. Five of our colleagues expressed their views and I replied to each of them. Shri Somnath Dada, if you want to be convinced in the legal language then I would say Adjourn sine-die means that the House is adjourned indefinitely and in such a situation the House resummoned at any point of time.

Secondly, unless the House is adjourned, it cannot be prorogued and in between the meeting of the House can be resummoned. Besides. . . .(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : There is no constitutional bar Only for the first session there is a bar.

I said that in regard to other Sessions, there is no bar. If it is the first session, Under Article 87, the Speaker cannot override the provisions of the Constitution.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : You please take your seat. I am on my legs. Somnath Dada, since I have heard your views, you should also listen to my views. When the House is not prorogued and if it is simply adjourned sine-die then in that situation the meeting of the House can be resummoned and that will not be treated as new session. But only Second part of the last session.

[Translation]

I am telling only that. . . *(Interruptions)* Somnath Dada you are quoting Kaul and Shakdhar that may be a Bible for you. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please keep quiet now. Let us listen to the Government.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : If you are an atheist, you should treat the Book of Kaul and Shakdhar as a Red Book rather than a Bible. This is your Red Book. You have quoted from Kaul and Shakdhar. I am quoting from Kaul and Shakdhar wherein it has been mentioned that if such a situation arises when the House is not prorogued and it has been adjourned sine die then in that situation the House can be resummoned and that is called the second part of the last session. That is not considered to be the new session. You have mentioned only one point.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : This is the first Session of the year, not a new Session of the year. This is the first Session of the year. The words here are not New Session. What is the meaning of 'first Session'? . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Refer to Page 169 of the Kaul and Shakdhar. . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I request the Parliamentary Affairs Minister to enlighten us as to whether this is the first Session of the year or not. . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : If it is during the Winter Session or the Monsoon Session, I would not have raised this question. This is the first Session of the year. The Constitution makes a specific provision in this matter. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You have made your point.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Anybody sitting on the Treasury Benches can enlighten us, 'Is this is the first Session of the year or not?' . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : No. . . *(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : No. . . *(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : No. . . *(Interruptions)*

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No. . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Voting does not make male into female and female into male. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, please go ahead with your argument.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : This has not happened for the first time. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : You have to enlighten us logically whether this is the first Session of the year or not. . . *(Interruptions)*

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : She mentioned about as to what happened in 1962. Please listen to her. . . .
(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, listen one more point of Sushmaji, than her point will be over. . . .
(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, the Law Minister and the Attorney-General should have advised the Government correctly on this matter. They have not done so. . . .
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I do not appreciate these interpretations. Please do not interrupt her.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I do not appreciate this. You are not to interrupt the other Member.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : The Law Minister or anybody who has advised the Government on this point is responsible. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY : I am not responsible for your lack of information. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except what Shrimati Sushma Swaraj says.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : May I ask one question?. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have not permitted you. She is not yielding.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, only what you say will go on record.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are free to give your ruling and sum up that this is not the first session rather it is the second phase of the Fourteenth session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha. . . .
(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know why you are all standing. Please sit down. A constitutional point has been raised. I am going to give my ruling on the issue. You cannot interrupt the Minister like this. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have every right to raise points of order. The points of order have been raised by very Senior Members. The Government have a right to reply on what they have said.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. I will not tolerate this. The Government is replying to the points of order which have been raised. I am going to give my final ruling. In the meantime, you cannot interrupt the Minister in the way in which you are trying to do. Nothing will go on record. Please sit down.

A very serious point was raised. This is the question on procedure. The serious point has to be replied by the Government. I am also making my mind on the issue. In the meantime, you cannot say that we will not listen to the Minister. Please sit down.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : 'Prorogation' means termination of the Session. Winter Session was not terminated. It was adjourned *sine die*. It has been reconvened.

[Translation]

This has happened several times in this Lok Sabha during the last fifty years and all those examples belong to their tenure. Mr. Speaker, Sir, once the House was not progrogged for 75 days during the Eighth Lok Sabha. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have not permitted anybody to speak except Shrimati Sushma Swaraj.

*(Interruptions)**[Translation]*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, what is that method. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, she has not yielded. I am not listening to you. I am not taking it on record. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : This was agreed in the Business Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Let the convention not be broken. The House is prorogued after the adjournment of the House. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Sushma Swarajji, you may speak.

[English]

Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, you can go ahead.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, the hon. Member understands it, but he is determined not to accept that. I tried to convince him on this point even on that day. That day he had accepted it. I had replied to both of his questions. What the House is adjourned sine die without prorogation and if in that situation the House is reconvened then that session is considered to be the second part of the same session. You can refer to page 169 of Kaul and Shakdhar's Rule book. This point is clearly mentioned there. . . *(Interruptions)*

Not Recorded.[English]*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I listened to your own concluding speech on 23rd December. In that speech, you said about the Session's story, the end of the Session and then the National Anthem was played. . . *(Interruptions)* Mr. Speaker, Sir, you refer to your own speech made on 23rd December.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : During the Eighth Lok Sabha, the House continued for 75 days after sine-die adjournment of session. . . *(Interruptions)* In 1962 also the session was reconvened while, the House was not prorogued. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : That was in the same year. Please do not mislead the House. . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : That was in the same year. . . *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the second part of the fourteenth session of 13th Lok Sabha. This is not the first session of the year. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What is the meaning of the words in article 87? . . . *(Interruptions)* That is the point. . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I would like to make it clear. I am prepared to resign from the Membership. Sir, in Rajiv Gandhi's time, it was in the same calendar year and not in the new year. You check it from the record book.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : If every session convened in January is considered to be a new session, then there are three instances of reconvening the House

[Shrimati Sushma Swaraj]

after the House was adjourned sine die without prorogation.
... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I challenge Shrimati Sushma Swaraj. Let her prove it. During Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, it was in the same calendar year that the Session adjourned *sine die*. The next Session was not in the new year. She should not take this plea. Shri Somnath Chatterjee said that it was in the first Session of the new year and that was in the same year.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, you please give an undisputed ruling. What I am saying is that this is not the new session. This is the second part of the fourteenth session of 13th Lok Sabha. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

This is the second part of the Fourteenth Session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What is the meaning of the words, 'first Session of each year' in article 87? It is uncertain. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Now you clarify whether it is the first Session of the new year or not. . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, if a session held in January every year is considered to be the new session of the year, then there are three such instances when the session of the Lok Sabha was reconvened without prorogation of the House after sine-die adjournment of Lok Sabha. One among them is of 21st January, 1963 when session of the Lok Sabha was reconvened without prorogation of the House. . . . (Interruptions) I prefer to state that this is the second part of the fourteenth session of the thirteenth Lok Sabha. Sir, please give the ruling. . . . (Interruptions) The eighth Lok Sabha continued for 75 days without prorogation of the House. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : We have also received New Year Greeting Cards on the behalf of the hon. Prime Minister. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA (Jhabua) : They are misleading the entire country. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, this is an open and shut case. . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

You are requested to give your ruling. . . . (Interruptions)

This is the second stage of the fourteenth session of the 13th Lok Sabha. . . . (Interruptions) This is not the new session of the year 2004. You are requested to give the ruling. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please sit down. I have allowed Shri Chandra Shekhar to speak now.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, please do something to remove their dejection, disappointment and frustration. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, this has the same effect of what I have pointed out. I have given the meaning of 'adjournment *sine die*'. . . . (Interruptions) I have read out from the dictionary the meaning of the word 'session'. . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Mr. Chatterjee has raised only one question that is whether this is the first session of the year or not therefore, the reply thereto should be specific. Sir, no representative institution or Parliamentary system can function with its foundation laid on falsehood and untruth. We can overlook

what the other Members speak but we were surprised when the Minister of Law himself said it with great emphasis that this is not the first session of the year. Nothing can be farther from the truth. If it is so, and the Government had some other arrangement they should disclose it. Neither a country nor any democracy can function on the basis of misconception about the rules and Minister pretation of words. This is the first session of the year and if owing to some reasons, you could not make it convenient to arrange for the President's Address, you should have sought the permission of the Hon. President or of the House. Therefore, whatever is happening here, is that efforts are on to run the parliamentary democracy on the basis of falsehood and untruth. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hold Shri Chandra Shekhar in high esteem. He said that there is no system. . . .(Interruptions) and that there is falsehood. . . .(Interruptions) If the prorogation of the earlier session would had been announced and a new session would have been convened then it would have been the first session of the year 2004. This is not the first session of the year 2004 instead it is the part two of the fourteenth session of the thirteenth Lok Sabha. . . .(Interruptions) This is what I am stating, not the hon. Minister of Law. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : She has quoted the hon. Minister of Law. I would like him to clarify the position. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Chandra Shekhar has made a statement and raised a very important question. Which interpretation is correct is for the hon. Speaker to decide and not really for any one of us to decide. Therefore, I would certainly join my colleagues on the other side and invite a ruling from you whether this is the first Session of this year or a continuation of the Winter Session of last year. The Winter Session was merely adjourned. It was not prorogued. . . .(Interruptions)

As per Kaul and Shakhder's *Practice and Procedure of Parliament*, page 183 :

"Termination of a session of the House by an order made by the President under article 85(2) is called 'prorogation'."

Now, the fact is that there is no prorogation of the House because there was no termination. Therefore, the Winter Session of last year continues. . . .(Interruptions) This is not the first time that this has happened.

12.00 hrs.

Exactly an identical situation took place in 1962. I again quote from page 183. On page 183 it is mentioned in the footnote :

"The Third Lok Sabha was adjourned on 11 December, 1962, till 21 January, 1963, with the result that its Third Session which commenced on 8 November 1962, continued till 25 January, 1963 and the House was not prorogued during the period of adjournment."

Therefore, what started on 21st January, 1963 was the continuation of the Last Session and not the first Session. Therefore, no President's Address under article 87 took place. Today, the situation is identical to 1962 and 1963. Therefore, I seek a ruling from you – It was Shri Chandra Shekhar, not me, who has talked of falsehood.

MR. SPEAKER : I have heard the Members. I am giving my ruling on this now. I have made up my mind.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, before you give your ruling, since Shri Arun Jaitley, the hon. Minister of Law and Justice, has cited, you may take time to go through the proceedings of the House. At that time, China invaded India and, in fact, the House was adjourned. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, before you give the ruling, . . .(Interruptions) Your ruling is going to bind us for years to come. . . .(Interruptions) We will beseech you that this ruling of yours will bind this House for years to come so let it be a considered one.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

Now, in extraordinary circumstances, the Emergency powers available to the Government are used and the inherent powers available to the hon. Speaker are also used. We do not use the extraordinary power. Now, the first and the most important point is – was the Budget passed in that Session? Was it non an Emergency? Is this not the next year? This is not 2003. This is 2004. This is the first Session of the year. There is no Emergency. Heavens would not have fallen if the President had addressed and for four or five days more the House would have sat. So, we request you to give the ruling which will not create a problem for the future but which will guide this House in transacting the business in the future also. We do not give the ruling to overcome the difficulties in one case. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Howsoever angrily Mr. Shivraj may speak, that won't change the rules. He quotes Kaul and Shakdhar. Their book says that whenever the House is reconvened after the sine-die adjournment of the House, it is considered as two separate parts. . . .(Interruptions) The latter is taken as the second part of the first session, it will not be termed as the new session and this happened not once but thrice in the past. You are requested to give the ruling that this is not the new session but second part of the fourteenth session of the 13th Lok Sabha.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : You are quoting the year 1962, when there was national emergency. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : The book on Practice and Procedure of Parliament by Kaul and Shakdhar has not addressed this. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I request you to listen to us while giving your ruling. Your ruling is welcome but I request you to repeat what you spoke on 23rd

December before the national anthem was played. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I would like to give my ruling on this important issue now. I have heard several Members and I have made up my mind to give the ruling on this important issue.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have already started giving my ruling.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Miryalguda) : The argument given by the Law Minister does not apply because national emergency was in operation in 1962 following the Chinese aggression. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Shri Balram Jhakar had said in 1987 while adjourning the House. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY : Article 87 is not suspended. It is only article 14, which was suspended, and not article 87. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shri Shivraj Patil, Dr. Raghuvans Prasad Singh, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj and Shri Arun Jaitely have enlightened me on this very important issue.

(Interruptions)

Let me at the outset make it clear that the rulings of the Speaker are generally in accordance with the rules, the rule book and also the Constitution of India. At times, it so happens that the issue requires ruling of Chair and in such circumstances the precedents are seen. If the precedents are not available, then the presiding officer has to make up his own mind and give a ruling on the issues which are raised. In this particular case, fortunately, there

are rules of procedure as well as definitions to guide us. I have gone through Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice. I would like the House to listen carefully to the ruling which I am now going to give.

Firstly, let me refer to Erskine May who has given, fortunately, a definition of the term 'prorogation'. He has said :

"A prorogation terminates a session; an adjournment is an interruption in the course of one and the same session."

Therefore, the point which was raised here about prorogation has been made clear by this definition.

Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni, at the outset, when he started his argument on the issue, had said that this cannot be treated as an interim Budget. Therefore, I had to go through the precedents to see whether this can be treated as an interim Budget or not. I find that this was treated as an interim Budget in the past also. For instance, I would like to bring it to the notice of the House that on 11th March, 1996 the general discussion on the interim Budget was listed in the List of Business. Not only this; there are also several instances when Vote-on-Account was called an interim Budget. Therefore, calling this a Vote-on-Account or calling this an interim Budget does not really make much difference.

But that was not the main point which was raised today. The main point which was raised by Shri Somnath Chatterjee was about the very holding of this Session and this point was also raised in the House by Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan and some other Members on 30th January, 2004 and the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs had responded to the points raised by the Members on that day. Shri Somnath Chatterjee has contended that what commenced on 29th January, 2004 was the first Session of the year. I would like to clarify that there is no mention of adjournment *sine die* of the House in the Constitution. As per the provisions of the Constitution, a Session of the House comes to an end when the House is prorogued. As the House was not prorogued after its adjournment *sine die* on 23rd December, 2003 this Session can, at best, be treated as the second part of the fourteenth Session of the

Thirteenth Lok Sabha notwithstanding the fact that the calendar year has since changed.

I am giving an illustration; I am giving a precedent regarding the Third Lok Sabha. On 11th December, 1962 the House adjourned to meet on 21st January, 1963.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA : Those were the days of emergency.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That was adjourned; it was not *sine die*.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This was treated as Part-II of the same Session.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I may inform the House that in the past also there have been occasions when after adjournment *sine die* of the House, the Lok Sabha was reconvened before prorogation.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : That is conceded. It is in the rule book.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (Khajuraho) : Sir, it was the same year. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I am just making a reference to it. For example, the Eighth Session of the Eighth Lok Sabha was adjourned *sine die* on 12th May, 1987, but the House was not prorogued.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI : It was the same calendar year. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Am I not expected to give the factual position in other cases also? I can always give the factual position. But the House was not prorogued and was reconvened after a gap of 75 days on 27th July 1987 as the second part of the Session. Similarly, the 14th Session of the Eighth Lok Sabha was adjourned *sine die* on 18th August 1989, but the House was not prorogued and was

reconvened on 11th October, 1989 after a gap of 53 days as second part of the 14th Session.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : There are several other similar instances also. I have already made a reference to the case when the House was adjourned and thereafter, through it was reconvened in the next year, it was not treated as the fresh Session. Therefore, I must make it clear that in this particular case also, this Session can be treated as the second part of the Winter Session. Since under the provisions.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, you have to hold that this is not the first Session of the year. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : After listening to the arguments, I have treated this as the second part of the Winter Session. Since under the provisions of the sub-clause (a) of clause (2) of article 85 of the Constitution, the power to prorogue the House vests in the hon. President – please remember that this power is with the hon. President – I am not inclined to allow any more discussion on the issue and I hold both the points of order out of order.

Now, I call upon the Minister to address his Budget Speech.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, this is an unfortunate day. . . *(Interruptions)* Sir, I had cited this dictionary, which is an authority. . . *(Interruptions)* I highlighted the authority. . . *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you please start.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have called upon the Finance Minister to address.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I appeal to the Treasury Benches to withdraw all the new year greeting cards sent to us because it is not a new year and the old year is still continuing. We shall return back all the new year greetings cards to them. . . *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajanj, Uttar Pradesh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Address of the President. . . *(Interruptions)* This Government has been violating the constitution flagrantly. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you please start.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing else should go on record excepting the speech of the Minister.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : These cross-talks will not go on record. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ramdas Athawale, please sit down. Certain matters regarding the procedure were raised in the House, and the ruling has been given on them. Now, it is for the hon. Finance Minister to present his Budget to the House. So, I would request the hon. Minister to start presenting the Budget to the House.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : Mr. Speaker Sir, . . . *(Interruptions)* Sir, kindly permit me to speak. . . *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President's Address should be first. . . *(Interruptions)*

*Not Recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. The entire country is seeing what you are doing. So, please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : Sir, you are right that the entire country is seeing as to what is being done in the Parliament! . . .*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President's Address should be first and thereafter the interim Budget should be presented. . . .*(Interruptions)* The President's Address should be first. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not proper. Please sit down.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President's Address should be first and thereafter the interim budget should be presented. . . .*(Interruptions)* The President's Address should be first. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you please start. When you will start everything would be all right.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, after this very interesting and illuminating overture. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you had said that you would be answering on the point whether this is the first Session of the Parliament in this year or not. But, you have not answered that question. Is this the first Session of the Parliament or not?

Sir, you had said that you would answer that question. But, Mr. Speaker Sir, you have not answered that question.

MR. SPEAKER : According to me I have already answered that question. Please sit down. According to me I have answered it.

Yes, Mr. Finance Minister, you can speak.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Sir, is this the first Session of the Parliament or not?

12.15 hrs.

INTERIM BUDGET GENERAL, 2004-2005

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to present an Interim Budget, for part of the fiscal year 2004-05. This seeks a ~~Vote-on-Account~~ to enable the Government to discharge its responsibilities and to meet all essential expenditure during the first four months of 2004-05. The Demands for Grants and the Annual Financial Statement presented are, however, for the full financial year, though, these could be revised, as is normal, at the time of presentation of the regular Budget. I am also introducing a Finance Bill, seeking to continue the existing tax structure of the present.

Under the premiership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, this is the seventh successive budget of the Government of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Why is there no Economic Survey?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : On this occasion I share with the country and the House a sense of great satisfaction at the robust showing of our national economy, and also express our sincere gratitude for the cooperation, support and encouragement that the people of India have so consistently and so ungrudgingly given to the NDA and to its Government. The country's macro-economic situation is better than it has ever been in the last fifty years. Internationally, too, there is now much greater, and a much more widespread recognition that India is progressing in all spheres of national endeavour, that it has evolved into a stable economy, with assured growth, and enhanced national prosperity.

[Shri Jaswant Singh]

II. NDA : Economic Policy – Approach and Achievements

This Government has consistently placed the citizens' well being at the core of its responsibilities. Our adherence to 'Panch priorities' remains. The objectives of the life-time concerns of our citizens: enhanced employment, and eradication of poverty; a second green revolution in agriculture; infrastructure development; fiscal consolidation; and greater manufacturing sector efficiency, are our solemn commitments.

We believe, Sir, that both are necessary; a vision for a resurgent India and, simultaneously an awakening so that the disadvantaged of our land are lifted beyond poverty. We hold that economic development is not about economics alone, it is always, simultaneously, a political statement too, for 'development' devoid of compassion is a misnomer. Of course, growth statistics are very important; they are vital inputs, but they must also be the indices that assist us in designing distributive justice. It is for this reason that 'gross national contentment' is so important, as the catalyst that motivates redoubled national endeavour. It is from seeking national contentment that objectives are born: "Garib ke pet me dana, Grihini ki tukia mein anna." Sir, India must be amongst the leading economies of the world, that simply put is our national destiny; to be in service of the country's destiny is the Government's honour and its bounden duty. From this directly flow our national economic objectives.

SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI (Diamond Harbour) : Many farmers have committed suicide.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Economic growth indices, in the current year, Mr. Speaker, are very encouraging. With inflation at 4 to 4.5 per cent, this year we expect the growth rate of our GDP to be between 7.5 and 8 per cent.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to make a submission here. A few sessions back, there had been a mention of one hon. Mungeri Lal. Then we searched for Mungeri Lal ji but his name was not there in the list. The submission

is that if you could inform Mungeri Lalji that his dreams have come true, I shall be very grateful to you.

[English]

Though, there are higher growth estimates that have been made, for the present, we prefer to remain with the figures that I have cited. This level of growth is a matter of great satisfaction. Sir, employment has increased, but so have expectations and the Government must meet this challenge. Bold initiatives in infrastructure have already generated several layers of immediate employment, simultaneously laying the foundation for additional quality employment across a broad spectrum of economic activity. The objective of enhancing job opportunities will be pursued vigorously. Our foreign exchange reserves crossed US\$100 billion on December 19, 2003. They continue to grow, liberating us from the mentality of want. For greater openness and to share necessary information with citizens, the first ever Report of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), on Foreign Exchange Reserves is being released today. It can be accessed on the Ministry of Finance as well as the RBI's website from today onwards.

Sir, a combination of moderate inflation, declining interest rates, and healthy capital markets has set our economy on the path of accelerated growth. To further encourage this is our responsibility. Preserving the strength of our macroeconomic fundamentals has, therefore, to be much more focused. Management of the economy is a continuing responsibility, governance can neither pause nor cease, and measures to fully consolidate, and continuously enhance the growth momentum must always be adopted in time. Only in that manner can we realise the vision of economic and social progress that we have cherished since independence.

III. Initiatives and the Road Ahead

Reform Measures

Antyodaya Anna Yojana

Antyodaya Anna Yojana, launched by the Prime Minister in December 2000, currently covers 1.5 crore families below the poverty line (BPL). This is a highly successful programme, widely acclaimed. It directly addresses poverty alleviation and nutritional adequacy.

This programme is now being extended by increasing its coverage to 2 crore BPL families. Whilst doing so, it will be ensured that tribal States, districts, or belts receive added allocations. This will be effective from April 1, 2004.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana

Poverty and disease are interlinked, Speciality hospitals in the private sector remain beyond the reach of many of our citizens. The Prime Minister had, therefore, last Independence Day, announced the establishing of six hospitals, in the Government sector, on the pattern of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). This 'Pradhanmantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana' envisages six new AIIMS like hospitals, one each in the States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttaranchal. Hon'ble Members are doubtless aware that no additional hospital on the pattern of AIIMS has been set up by any Government, since 1956.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Canara) : What about South? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : What about Maharashtra?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : I would also like to mention that under this Pradhanmantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, one medical college each in the six States of Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal will also be upgraded to the level of AIIMS.

I am happy to announce that provisions for both these schemes has been made in this Budget itself.

Rural

The Government is committed to ensuring the availability of timely credit at affordable rates to our farmers, and to other citizens in rural India. For this objective, the following additional measures will be taken :

- In July, 2003, a reduction in the rate of interest for crop loans by public sector banks to 9 per cent was announced for the farming sector. The NABARD Act was also appropriately amended.

I have been urging the Indian Banks' Association to further lower the interest rates for agricultural purposes. Some public sector banks have already done so. I am confident when I say and announce here that other banks will also respond by offering loans at rates lower than those prevailing currently for the agriculture sector.

- Traditionally, banks have sought relatively higher security on credit for agriculture. To illustrate, banks insist on mortgaging the entire land holding of a farmer borrower, as security for advances for agricultural purposes. Banks are, therefore, now being advised to assess individual credit-worthiness and to not routinely insist on additional collateral through a mortgage of the entire land holding. As a principle banks have advised that collateral security should be proportionate to the value of the loan.
- Prescriptions relating to Non-Performing Assets (NPAs), in relation to crop loan accounts, have posed problems in the provisioning of credit to farmers where seasonality and uncertainty of farm incomes are not fully captured. A Committee has therefore been set up under Dr. V.S. Vyas, an eminent agriculture economist, to address this issue. Suitable remedial measures in this regard will be recommended by the Committee within 90 days.
- I expect all eligible farmers to be in receipt of their Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) by March 31, 2004. To extend the benefit of technological developments in the banking industry to rural India, the existing Kisan Credit Card will hereafter be modified, upon individual request, for us on ATM machines, wherever such facility exists.
- A Farm Income Insurance Scheme has been introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture in 20 districts, on a pilot basis. This will be extended to 100 districts, of the country from the

[Shri Jaswant Singh]

forthcoming Kharif season. Details will be announced shortly by the Ministry of Agriculture.

- Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been a remarkable success story, but only in some States of the country. NABARD has, therefore, been advised to take up a special promotional campaign in the States where this programme is yet to gather momentum. In the first phase, an intensive programme will, therefore, be launched in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Public Sector Banks will also supplement this effort in other States.
- Sir, now I come to tea. Tea is an important agro-processing industry, employing a large number of our citizens in North Bengal, Assam, the North-East and some of the Southern States. Currently, this industry is beset by many problems. I had, therefore, tasked the Indian Banks Association to prepare a revival package. This has now been finalized. Special Tea Term Loan, repayable in five years, with a moratorium of one year, shall be provided. In case of small tea growers banks have agreed to extend fresh working capital limits up to Rs. 2 lakh, at an interest rate of 9 per cent only.
- In addition, steps will be undertaken to examine the feasibility of a debt amelioration scheme in the tea sector, too.
- Sugar is another major agro-processing industry of the country, generating substantial employment, but it currently faces a complex web of problems. Government will, therefore, prepare a package for the revitalisation of this industry, in consultation with all the stakeholders. In the meantime, as a measure of temporary relief, restructuring of loans taken by sugar factories will be examined by the lending agencies, including banks, in consultation with RBI and NABARD.

Cooperative banks have always played a vital role in the delivery of rural credit. They, too, have a variety of problems hampering their capacity to deliver credit at reasonable rates of interest. A scheme to revitalize the cooperative credit structure, envisaging an outlay of about Rs. 15,000 crore, to be shared between the Central and State Governments, in an appropriate ratio, has been prepared. It is proposed to initiate this important scheme as soon as the revised regulatory framework has been put in place.

Cattle Development

Cattle are a vital integral of our rural economy. To give a boost to the entire gamut of this economic activity, such as animal husbandry, dairying and sheep rearing, the Government will examine the setting up of a National Cattle Development Board with appropriate budgetary support.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Is it the development of livestock or making money out of the livestock.

[English]

Laghu Udyami Credit Cards

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : To further encourage the development of small-scale and self-employed ventures steps have been taken to liberalise Laghu Udyami Credit Card scheme, providing small and medium enterprises easier access to bank credit. It has now been decided, in consultation with IBA, that the public sector banks will increase the credit limit of their cards, for borrowers with satisfactory track record, from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh. Banks are being advised to make the modified scheme operational from March 1, 2004.

Stamp Duty Reform

A comprehensive reform of the entire stamp duty regime is being addressed in consultation with State Governments, as high stamp duty increases transaction costs and restricts economic activity. The Government has,

in the meantime, decided to reduce stamp duty on all such instruments where the authority to fix rates is of the Central Government. As a first step, and as the first reduction, the existing stamp duty structure is being halved, that is, being reduced by 50 per cent on all Central Government stamp papers. As for duty on Receipts, here too, the threshold for payment of stamp duty is to be increased from Rs. 500 to Rs. 50,000. As, however, this last reform requires an amendment to the Act, it will be operational after the Act has been amended.

The Government has decided to make announcements about certain Special Areas

Island territories

The district of Nicobar, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is one of our remotest districts. These islands, separated by vast distances across the sea are relatively inaccessible. Therefore, in the Nicobar group of islands, a hard area allowance at the rate of 25 per cent of basic pay will, with effect from April 1, 2004, be paid to all Government employees posted there.

[Translation]

SHRI BISHNU PADA RAY (Andaman and Nicobar Islands): Andaman has been included. Thank you. . . .
(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please keep quiet.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Due to high cost of construction, consequently the high rentals prevailing in this region, and as directed by the Prime Minister it has been decided that the status of Port Blair be raised from a 'C' to a 'B-1' class city, for the purpose of house rent allowance (HRA). Simultaneously, rural areas of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the entire union Territory of Lakshadweep will also stand upgraded from their existing status of 'unclassified' to 'C' class city, for the purpose of payment of this allowance.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : What about Lakshadweep?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : It has been said about Lakshadweep?

[English]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Consequently, HRA will also be raised from 7.5 per cent to 15 per cent of the basic pay in all other areas of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Simultaneously, Sir, the status of State of Goa is also being raised from 'C' to 'B-1', from April 1, 2004, for the purpose of HRA.

Desert areas

I do come from a desert area of the country. But this is not why the announcement is being made here. The desert areas of the country are under a variety of stresses. Most of them are also either border districts or are contiguous to it. Last year, I had announced the 'Maru Gochar Yojana', a special programme for rehabilitation and development of traditional pasture lands in the desert districts of Rajasthan. I am glad to inform Hon'ble Members that implementation of this programme has started. I now propose to establish a Task Force for Integrated Development of Desert Areas, with a mandate to address the problem of sustainable livelihood in our deserts. This Task Force will review all relevant current programmes, identify gaps, define thrust areas, and make appropriate recommendations. It will also examine the establishment of a Rural Technology Centre, in one of the desert districts, and give its recommendations in this regard.

The Indian Gandhi canal project has languished for decades, slowly inching its way, year after year, through the desert. Considering the inordinate delay in its completion and the critical importance of water in our desert areas, this canal project will, hereafter, be accelerated through a fresh Centre-State initiative, including additional, innovative funding. Similarly, for an extension into Rajasthan of the Narmada Canal too, the Ministry of Finance will work with the Government of Rajasthan and assist it in financing an early completion.

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Kutch and adjoining districts

At present, new industrial units in the Kutch District of Gujarat, established during the period from July 31, 2001 to July 31, 2004 and which start commercial production on or before July 31, 2004 are exempt from excise duty. In order to give some more time for completion of such projects, I am extending the last date, for setting up of such new units, from July 31, 2004 to December 31, 2004. The period of exemption from excise duty will continue to be five years from the date of start of commercial production.

Water Scarcity in some of our Metropolitan Cities

Several initiatives have been taken by this Government to address the vital question of providing an assured supply of potable water to rural India. Metropolitan cities have until now had to address this shortage through either their own municipal resources or on the strength of support received from their respective State Governments. The need and demand for water has grown much faster than additional supply measures. The Prime Minister has, therefore, decided and directed to initiate an accelerated drinking water supply scheme for mega cities, such as Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Hyderabad.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : What about Mumbai.
... (Interruptions)

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL (Kanpur) : Nothing has been provided for Kanpur. There is acute shortage of potable water. Therefore, Kanpur should also have been covered under this scheme.

MR. SPEAKER : When you will get the opportunity to speak during the discussion on the interim budget, then you should make your point.

[English]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : The provision for existing Central scheme for infrastructure development in mega-cities will be augmented by accessing the Infrastructure

Fund, the Life Insurance Corporation and other such funding sources. Details will be initiated and finalised by the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the scheme is operational by March 1, 2004.

I had said 'such as,' which means for example.
... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : What is the allocation?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : What is the total amount?

Convention Centres

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Government has now decided upon the venues for four global standard international convention centres, to be established through private-public partnership. I am glad that two of these will be located in the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Mumbai, and one each in Goa and Rajasthan.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA (Contai) : What about Kolkata?

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : What about Hyderabad?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Both Goa and Rajasthan have great tourism potential, but need more infrastructural facilities. Goa will thus also be enabled to provide suitable facilities for holding international film festivals. So that the convention centre in Jaipur functions effectively, the airport in Jaipur will be converted into an international airport. Details of all these will be announced shortly.

Development Finance

There is no alternative to development finance. Steps to revive and restructure the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) are already in hand. In accordance with the mandate of the Parliament, the Ministry of Finance is committed to preserving and strengthening the IDBI's role as a development financial institution.

The current economic growth pattern requires continuous and added investment. For this, finance has to

be made available timely, at reasonable rates and in a coordinated manner. Since the restructured IDBI has the requisite experience and expertise in project appraisal, funding and coordination, it has been decided to designate IDBI as the lead developmental finance institution. Government will provide necessary support to IDBI for this task. IDBI's effort will be complemented by other premier institutions and banks such as the Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation and the State Bank of India.

Similarly, the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) will be restructured through transfer of its impaired assets to an Asset Reconstruction Company and merger with a large public sector bank. Both these institutions, the IDBI and IFCI, should be functional in the new financial year after their transformation.

Other Schemes

The Agricultural Infrastructure and Credit Fund, the Small and Medium Enterprise Fund, and the Industrial Infrastructure Fund will be operational shortly. All the three funds will, without compromising the norms of financial prudence, provide credit at highly competitive rates, which is expected to be 2 percentage points below the Prime Lending Rate (PLR).

I wish to reiterate that the Agricultural Infrastructure and Credit Fund will provide credit support to infrastructure facilities such as wasteland development, completion of existing but incomplete minor irrigation projects plus new minor irrigation works, grading, certification, and storage of agro-products, and construction of modern abattoirs. This Fund will be called 'Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Fund'. Similarly, the Small and Medium Enterprises SMS Fund will address the problem of inadequacy of financial resources, at highly competitive rates for the small-scale sector, and a lack of SIDBI coverage for some of the medium-sized enterprises. The Industrial Infrastructure Fund will provide credit at highly competitive rates for power generation, seaports, airports, roads, tourism, telecommunication, and urban infrastructure like municipal services, water supply, sewage disposal and environmental projects.

Defence Modernisation Fund

The process of defence procurement often extends to over three years. Adequate and a committed availability of funds, over such a period, for defence modernisation and weapons systems acquisition needs a satisfactory resolution. It has accordingly been decided to establish a non-lapsable, Defence Modernisation Fund of Rs. 25,000 crore. This will commit availability of adequate funds for the purpose. The Fund will be made available to the Ministry of Defence from the new financial year.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (Khajuraho) : Till they utilise it.

Employee Welfare

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : The Fifth Central Pay Commission had recommended that Dearness Allowance (DA) should be merged with basic pay whenever the DA exceeds 50 per cent of pay. At present, DA is at 59 per cent of pay. The Government having re-examined this recommendation in depth has therefore, decided that DA, to the extent of 50 per cent of pay, will be merged with basic pay. This will take effect from April 1, 2004.

Direct taxes

Some necessary changes in Income Tax procedures require the amendment of the Income Tax Act. While changes in the Act are currently not being proposed, it is the conviction of the Government, also our commitment that.

- Fiscal benefits available to new projects in the power sector should be extended up to 2012, instead of 2006, and also be available to cases of take-over from State Electricity Boards.
- The regime of listed equities acquired on or after March 1, 2003 being exempt from long-term capital gains tax should be extended for a further period of three years, so as to provide stability.
- More than 90 per cent of world shipping tonnage is subject to very low levels of taxation. To provide a level playing field so that Indian,

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shipping becomes internationally competitive, a tonnage tax scheme, with notional income at a fixed rate, on the basis of net registered tonnage should be considered.

- Farmers face hardship on account of levy of tax on capital gains, and accrued interest on enhanced compensation, when their agricultural land is acquired by the Government. The Government believes that capital gains on such acquisition should be exempt from tax. There should also be no deduction of tax at source on the interest earned on enhanced compensation for acquisition of such land.

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) has scope for employment generation. It has been clarified that if outsourced services are ancillary and auxiliary in nature and adequate remuneration is paid to the Indian call centre, then there shall be no tax on such foreign company as has outsourced its activity to India. This policy is on the lines of OECD norms and double taxation avoidance agreements.

It is also the conviction of the Government that for the salaried class, which doubtless has the best track record of tax compliance, the issue of revising the standard deduction for Income Tax purposes has now to be revisited. Furthermore, the tax treatment of family pension of war widows merits a review so as to enable them to live a life of dignity. We also need to revisit the present exemption limits and to realign them appropriately.

Indirect Taxes

For consolidating the growth process, the Government has already announced some measures on January 8, 2004. These steps were timely and necessary. I shall not repeat them.

Capital goods

To enable our domestic industry to compete with imported capital goods, which are currently subject to a 10 per cent basic customs duty, I have already reduced

such duty on a number of raw materials, intermediates and components for their manufacture. This has removed an anomaly.

A suggestion has been made that wherever there is exemption from countervailing duty on an imported capital good, deemed export benefits ought to be given to the very same capital good, indigenously manufactured. There already exists a scheme for giving deemed export benefits for specified projects, where procurement is through international competitive bidding. Ministry of Finance, in consultation with Ministry of Commerce, will nevertheless, examine this suggestion in order to provide a level playing field to domestic manufacturers.

Power

The Task Force on Power Sector Investment and Reforms has recommended exploring the possibility of making countervailing duty for the power sector cenvatable. This suggestion, too, will be examined.

In the last budget, exemption from excise duty on residual fuel oils for generation of power, available only to units licensed under the Electricity Act 1910, was extended to generating companies licensed under the Electricity Supply Act 1948. It has been requested that this exemption, for units licensed under the 1948 Act, may now be made applicable retrospectively, whenever electricity was supplied to State Electricity Boards, and the cost of generation was governed by power purchase agreements. I believe that a suitable legislative measure for a retrospective exemption of this nature should be considered.

Baggage rules

To further reduce congestion at the customs counters in the arrival halls of our international airports, free baggage allowance is being raised from Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 25,000. Customs duty on such baggage is also being reduced from 50 per cent to 40 per cent. This will be effective from today.

User-friendly tax administration

The move towards an improved tax administration through greater application of IT, and a discretion-free,

impersonal system with lower compliance costs must continue. It is with this objective in mind, that I am pleased to announce.

- round the clock electronic filing of customs documents for clearance of goods, presently available in 9 customs formations will be extended to 23 customs formations by March 31, 2004;
- customs clearance will now be based on self-assessment and selective examination from June 30, 2004.
- an 8-digit code classification of goods for the levy of excise will be adopted by September 30, 2004, to bring greater transparency, avoid classification dispute, and harmonise excise classification with customs and EXIM Policy nomenclature;
- compounding of offences under Union excise rules, for quick settlement of disputes, will be introduced from June 30, 2004; and
- e-filing of excise returns will also be introduced from June 30, 2004 to enhance excise automation and for better reconciliation of revenue accounts.

Service tax

To enable levy of tax on services as a specific and important source of revenue, an amendment to the Constitution is already in hand. In the interim, the service tax was extended to seven new services in the last Budget. To facilitate the filing of returns and to reduce the compliance cost under this important source of revenue, I am glad to announce that from January 2, 2004.

- only a simple verification is being made for grant of registration for service tax;
- there is a single registration and single return for assesses providing more than one taxable service; and
- service tax automation has been enhanced by extending e-filing of returns and also their

electronic scrutiny from 10 services to all the 58 taxable services.

IV. Revised and Budget Estimates

I must now inform the House about the essentials of our book-keeping for the current year, as also for 2004-05.

Revised Estimates for 2003-2004

The Revised Estimates show a net decrease in expenditure of Rs. 11,143 crore as compared to the Budget estimates. This reduction in expenditure has been achieved despite additional expenditure on Rural Development on the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, on the Delhi Metro Rail Project and additional budgetary support for the Railways

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh) : On mega advertisements.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Net tax revenues for the Centre are estimated at Rs. 187,539 crore compared to the Budget estimate of Rs. 184,169 crore, which is an increase of Rs. 3,370 crore. Non tax revenue is estimated at Rs. 75,488 crore, Rs. 5722 crore more than the estimated level of Rs. 69,766 crore. Disinvestment receipts, at Rs. 14,500 crore, are also higher than budget estimate of Rs. 13,200 crore.

The revised revenue receipts of the Centre are estimated at Rs. 263,027 crore, the fiscal deficit at Rs. 132,103 crore which is 4.8 per cent of the estimated GDP and the revenue deficit at Rs. 99,860 crore which is 3.6 per cent of the estimated GDP.

I trust Sir, that Hon'ble Members would observe, and approve of the fact that the Government has demonstrated its resolve about fiscal consolidation by performing better than the budgeted targets.

Budget Estimates for 2004-2005

In the budget estimates for 2004-2005, the total expenditure is estimated at Rs. 457,434 crore, of which Rs. 135,071 crore is for Plan and Rs. 322,363 crore for on-Plan.

[Shri Jaswant Singh]

Plan expenditure

In order to strike the right balance between the developmental needs on one hand and fiscal stability on the other, the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) for Plan 2004-05 has been fixed at Rs. 135,071 crore. This is Rs. 14,097 crore more than last year, indicating an increase of 11.6 per cent. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 81,367 crore is being provided as Budget support for Central Plan. This is an increase of Rs. 9,215 crore, or 12.8 per cent, over the last year. Similarly, the Central Assistance for State Plans is Rs. 53,704 crore, which is Rs. 4,882 crore more than last year. Should need arise for new schemes, such as Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA), the Government will then provide additional allocations for such schemes.

Non-plan Expenditure

The budget estimates for 2004-2005 show a net increase of Rs. 16,218 crore in non-plan expenditure. The increase is mainly in interest payments and debt servicing (Rs. 4,945 crore), defence (Rs. 5,700 crore), grants and loans to State Governments (Rs. 4,110 crore) and food subsidy (Rs. 2,600 crore).

Revenue estimate and Fiscal deficit

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with these proposals I estimate total revenue receipts of the Centre at Rs. 290,882 crore, the fiscal deficit at Rs. 136,452 crore, which is 4.4 per cent of the estimated GDP and the revenue deficit at Rs. 89,860 crore, which is 2.9 per cent of the estimated GDP.

V. Conclusion

Sir, I had the honour of being given the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance in July, 2002. I have served here for just about a year and a half. During this period it has been my privilege to see the Indian economy enter onto a sustained and robust growth path of around 7.5 to 8 per cent per year. This has only been possible only because of the reforms pursued by the NDA, as well indeed by earlier Governments, of the contribution in this Ministry of my distinguished predecessor, Shri Yashwant

Sinha, and above all, of the support and leadership provided by Prime Minister Vajpayee.

Under the stewardship of Shri Vajpayee, the NDA Government, since March 19, 1998, has not only successfully weathered the post-Pokhran economic sanctions; East Asian crisis; at least two major destructive cyclones; an unprecedented drought; the devastating Bhuj earthquake; two border stand-offs; the challenge of terrorism and insurgency; the gulf war; a global downturn; uncertainty in oil prices, all these and much else. Despite these multiple challenges, the Government, during this period, brought down the fiscal deficit to 4.8 per cent of GDP, the revenue deficit to 3.6 per cent, and contained annual average inflation at around 4.8 per cent. Our revenue collection in the period 1998-2004, has gone up by about 83 per cent, our capital markets are healthy, the UTI is a market leaders again, our foreign exchange reserves have nearly quadrupled to the never ever achieved level of over \$100 billion, our GDP, in this period, has increased by almost 40 per cent, and to my belief, national contentment, national confidence, and our collective resolve for achieving even higher growth has now taken firm root.

Sir, I commend this interim budget to the House.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8817/2004]

13.05 hrs.

FINANCE BILL*, 2004

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to continue for the financial year 2004-05 the existing rates of income-tax and the levy of the National Calamity Contingent duty and the National Calamity Contingent Duty of Customs on certain items.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

*Placed in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary Part-II, Section-2, dated 3.2.2004.

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to continue for the financial year 2004-05 the existing rates of income-tax and the levy of the National Calamity Contingent duty and the National Calamity Contingent Duty of Customs on certain items."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : The Bill has been introduced.

[English]

13.05¼ hrs.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS – (GENERAL) 2003-2004

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : I beg to present a statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of Budget (General) for 2003-2004.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8818/2004]

[Translation]

13.05¼ hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIPKUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI) : Sir, on behalf of Shri Shatrughan Sinha, I beg to lay on the Table :

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956 :-
 - (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Dredging Corporation of India, Visakhapatnam, for the year 2002-2003.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Dredging Corporation of India, Visakhapatnam, for the year 2002-

2003, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the paper mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8804/2004]

- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Cochin Port Trust, Cochin, for the year 2002-2003, together with Audit Report thereon under sub-section (2) of section 103 of the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government on the Audited Accounts of the Cochin Port Trust, Cochin, for the year 2002-2003.
- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the paper mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8805/2004]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Inland Waterways Authority of India, Noida, for the year 2002-2003, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Inland Waterways Authority of India, Noida, for the year 2002-2003.
- (6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the paper mentioned at (5) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8806/2004]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

[Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar]

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956 :-

(a) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the HMT Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2002-2003.

(ii) Annual Report of the HMT Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2002-2003, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8807/2004]

(b) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Nepa Limited, Napanagar, for the year 2002-2003.

(ii) Annual Report of the Nepa Limited, Napanagar, for the year 2002-2003, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Two statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8808/2004]

(3) A copy each of the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) under article 151(1) of the Constitution :-

(i) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Commercial) (No. 1 of 2004) – Public Sector Undertakings – Review on Accounts – for the year ended March, 2003.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8809/2004]

(ii) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Commercial) (No. 2 of 2004) – Public Sector Undertakings – Comments on Accounts – for the year ended March, 2003.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8810/2004]

(iii) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Commercial) (No. 3 of 2004) – Public Sector Undertakings – Transaction Audit Observations – for the year ended March, 2003.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8811/2004]

(iv) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Commercial) (No. 4 of 2004) – Public Sector Undertakings – Reviews on some of the activities of selected PSUs – for the year ended March, 2003.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8812/2004]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : I beg to lay on the Table :-

(1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962 :-

(i) G.S.R. 911 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th November, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 43/2003-Cus. (NT), dated the 22nd July, 2003.

(ii) G.S.R. 912 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th November, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum

- making certain amendments in the Notification mentioned therein.
- (iii) G.S.R. 933 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 8th December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 15/2002-Cus. (NT), dated the 7th March, 2002.
- (iv) G.S.R. 934 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 8th December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum seeking to appoint officers of Customs as officers of Customs in respect of all Special Economic Zones.
- (v) G.S.R. 975 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 43/2003-Cus. (N.T.), dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (vi) G.S.R. 976 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notifications mentioned therein.
- (vii) The Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Rules, 2003 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 977 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum.
- (viii) The Special Economic Zones (Customs Procedures) (Amendment) Regulations, 2003 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 978 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum.
- (ix) G.S.R. 980 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 113/2003-Cus., dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (x) G.S.R. 981 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 114/2003-Cus., dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (xi) G.S.R. 982 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 115/2003-Cus., dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (xii) G.S.R. 3 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 2nd January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 52/2003-Cus., dated the 31st March, 2003
- (xiii) G.S.R. 58 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 21st January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 12/97-Cus., (N.T.) dated the 2nd April, 1997 together with a Corrigendum thereto published in Notification No. G.S.R. 73(E) dated the 23rd January, 2004.
- (xiv) S.O. 120 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 27th January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum regarding revised rate of exchange for conversion of certain foreign currencies into Indian currency or vice-versa for the purpose of assessment of import.
- (xv) S.O. 121 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 27th January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum regarding revised rate of exchange for conversion of certain foreign currencies into Indian currency or vice-versa for the purpose of assessment of export.

[Shri Shripad Yesso Naik]

- (xvi) G.S.R. 952 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 17th December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum regarding exemption to beer of Nepalese origin from whole of the additional duty of Customs leviable thereon when imported into India.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8813/2004]

- (2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (2) of section 38 of the Central Excise Act, 1944 :-

- (i) G.S.R. 910 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th November, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 58/2003-CE (N.T.), dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (ii) G.S.R. 979 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 58/2003-CE (N.T.), dated the 22nd July, 2003.
- (iii) G.S.R. 983 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st December, 2003 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the two Notifications mentioned therein.
- (iv) G.S.R. 2 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 2nd January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 22/2003-CE dated the 31st March, 2003.
- (v) G.S.R. 84 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th January, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the two Notifications mentioned therein.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8814/2004]

- (3) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 36 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 :-

- (i) G.S.R. 935 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 9th December, 2003 regarding change in the location of three Debts, Recovery Tribunals mentioned in the Notification.

- (ii) G.S.R. 940 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 11th December, 2003 regarding change in the location of Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8815/2004]

- (3) A copy of the Indian Bank General (Amendment) Regulations, 2003 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. BS/LKN/781/2003-04 in Gazette of India dated the 19th December, 2003 under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfers of Undertakings) Act, 1970.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8816/2004]

13.06 hrs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

[English]

(I) Re : Group Photograph of Members

MR. SPEAKER : As the hon. Members are aware, a Group Photograph of Members of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha will be taken tomorrow, that is, Wednesday, the 4th February, 2004 at 9.30 a.m. between Gate No. 1 and the Central Hall, Parliament House, New Delhi.

Hon. Ministers and the hon. Members are therefore requested kindly to make it convenient to join the photograph by assembling at the appointed place by 9.15 a.m. sharp.

A chart showing the seating arrangements on the chairs, has been displayed on the Notice Boards in P.N.O.

and the Outer Lobby for the information of the hon. Members.

13.07 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS'
BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

[English]

Thirty-ninth Report

SHRI P.M. SAYEED (Lakshadweep) : I beg to present the Thirty-ninth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

[English]

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : Sir, the Prime Minister should be present here in the House.
... (Interruptions)

13.08 hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FORESTS

**One hundred nineteenth to one hundred
twenty-fourth Reports**

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests :—

- (1) One Hundred-nineteenth Report on Action Taken by the Department of Ocean Development on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-fifteenth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Department of Ocean Development;
- (2) One Hundred-twentieth Report on Action Taken by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-thirteenth Report of the

Committee on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research;

- (3) One Hundred-twenty first Report on Action Taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-Twelfth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests;
- (4) One Hundred-twenty second Report on Action Taken by the Department of Biotechnology on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-sixteenth Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Department of Biotechnology;
- (5) One Hundred-twenty third Report on Action Taken by the Department of Space on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-fourteenth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Department of Space; and
- (6) One Hundred-twenty fourth on Action Taken by the Department of Science and Technology on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred-seventeenth Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Department of Science and Technology.

[English]

13.10 hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT,
TOURISM AND CULTURE

Seventy-fourth to Seventy-seventh Reports

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : I beg to lay on the table a copy each of the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture :—

1. Seventy-fourth Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations,

[Shri G.M. Banatwalla]

Observations of the Committee contained in its 67th Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

2. Seventy-fifth Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations of the Committee contained in its 70th Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of Ministry of Shipping.
3. Seventy-sixth Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations of the Committee contained in its 68th Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of Department of Culture, and
4. Seventy-seventh Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations of the Committee contained in its 69th Report on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

13.11 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Matter under rule 377, listed for the day, be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

- (I) **Need to construct road over bridges over Budi Gandak river at Pipar Pati and Janrawa Ghats in Bihar**

[Translation]

DR. M.P. JAISWAL (Bettiah) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budhi Gandak river demarcates my parliamentary constituency in two parts. The villagers on both sides who have to commute to and fro for employment and business purposes do not have a convenient passage. The income of these people is very meagre and the avenues of

employment are less. If two road bridges are constructed at Pipar Pati Ghat and Janarwa Ghat of the Budhi Gandak river that would facilitate in connecting villages located on both the side of the river and that would also increase the avenues of employment for villagers finally leading to rural development.

I, therefore, urge upon the Union Government through this august House to kindly construct road bridges at the above ghats of the river.

- (II) **Need to release funds for setting up a high power TV transmission centre at Radhanpur, Gujarat**

SHRI HARIBHAI CHAUDHARY (Banaskantha) : Sir, a high power transmission centre at Radhanpur under my parliamentary constituency, Banaskantha was sanctioned but Rs. 9 crore 56 lakh which were sanctioned for this purpose have not been released so far following which the work on this project has not yet commenced. Pakistani programmes are being relayed in the nearby areas of Radhanpur and Pakistan is trying to create an anti India feeling in the people there as a result of which the anti India activities are getting a boost in North Gujarat. Our experiences tell us that several steps would have to be taken to check infiltration and smuggling of narcotics and weapons from across the border. For this we will have to create an awareness among people and for this purpose programmes would have to be relayed from the proposed TV centre. Therefore a high power TV centre is urgently required there.

I therefore, urge upon the Government through this august House that Rs. 9 crore 56 lakh should immediately be released so that the work for setting up a high power TV centre at Radhanpur could be undertaken.

- (III) **Need to approve the proposal of the Government of Gujarat for inclusion of Palmolein Oil in Tariff Rate Quota and permit its Import**

[English]

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodra) : The Government of Gujarat had requested vide letter dated the

*Treated as laid on the Table

16th January, 2003, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Food, Minister of State for Finance and Commerce for inclusion of Palmolein Oil in Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) of Director General of Foreign Trade, besides permission to import 13,000 tonnes of Palmolein for distribution to poor families in the PDS.

I urge the Union Government to review, consider and accord early approval and sanction for the same.

- (iv) **Need to place work order for construction of a new bridge on river Yamuna at Wazirabad, East Delhi**

[Translation]

SHRI LAL BIHARI TIWARI (East Delhi) : Sir, a bus accident took place on the Wazirabad bridge in my constituency East Delhi on 18 December, 1997 in which 28 children lost their lives and 62 were injured. This incident was looked into by a team headed by Deputy Commissioner who on one hand found the traffic police and the bus driver responsible for this accident, also found the thickly populated trans-Yamuna areas as another cause of the accident, and in view of this construction of an additional bridge along the existing bridge was suggested, but even after a lapse of about 6 years, the construction of this bridge has not yet been started. I have raised this matter in the House on a number of occasions and in reply I was assured that a new bridge would be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. 130 crores. I have just got the information that the estimates in this regard have been made but work has not been placed as yet.

So, through you, I urge upon the Central Government to start the construction of this bridge immediately so that such an unfortunate incident may not take place again and also that the people of the area may get better transport facility.

- (v) **Need to introduce MEMU rail services on Tata Nagar-Badbil and Tata Nagar Rourkela routes**

SHRI LAXMAN GILUWA (Singhbhum) : Sir, there has been a demand for years to introduce MEMU train services between Tata Nagar Rourkela, and Tata Nagar-Badbil. This is highly needed because Badbil and Tata Nagar – both

are steel cities and their interlinking is necessary. There is a huge mineral reserve on this rail route and mining is in progress there. There is only one express rail service in this area which does not cater to the needs of the local people because the means of transport in this area are quite limited. Introduction of the MEMU trains will help a lot in the development of this tribal coal belt.

Through this House, I urge upon the Central Government to introduce both the said MEMU trains as soon as possible.

- (vi) **Need to construct an over-bridge/under bridge on rail line at Gangdhara, Veerpar and Uchchhal on National Highway No. 6 in Gujarat**

SHRI MANSINH PATEL (Mandvi) : Sir, the Surat-Vadodara-Dhulia National Highway No. 6 has been upgraded and it being an industrial city, the traffic is very heavy on this highway round the clock. This national highway crosses the rail line at Ganghara, Veerpar and Uchchhal between Bhusawal and Surat, and there are no overbridges or underbridges which causes traffic jams during peak hours posing a lot of difficulties to the people.

So, it is highly necessary to construct a rail overbridge or underbridge on these places in public interest and in order to facilitate smooth traffic thereon.

I urge upon the Government to construct rail overbridge or underbridge at Gangdhara, Veerpar and Uchchhal on National Highway No. 6.

- (vii) **Need to bring the districts of Sivaganga, Pudukottai and Ramnad in Tamil Nadu under the ambit of the Drought Prone Area Programme**

[English]

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (Sivaganga) : The Districts of Sivaganga, Pudukottai and Ramnad in Tamil Nadu State are facing drought for the past three years. People are migrating for employment and livelihood. Special Package should be announced by extending DPAP through – out the area and cash compensation with employment scheme should be announced immediately.

(viii) Need to ensure remunerative prices to the paddy growers in Chhattisgarh

[Translation]

DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT (JANJGIR) : Sir, the 80 per cent population of Chhattisgarh who grow paddy as their main crop are dependent on agriculture. Despite the high yield of paddy this year the farmers are not getting the support price of Rs. 550.00 and Rs. 580.00 per quintal fixed last year by the Government. The farmers are compelled to sell their produce at a price lesser by Rs 50/- to 75/-. The State Government is claiming to have procured 8 lakh tonnes of paddy. As per the estimate, procurement of 25 lakh tonnes of paddy should be made this year. But the State Government has not yet announced the new support price for paddy. Rather, in order to benefit the business class, instructions have been issued to start the milling of paddy. The farmers of Chhattisgarh are losing. They are sad and disappointed.

I, urge upon the Central Government to immediately announce the support price for paddy and made arrangements for its procurement and put an immediate ban on the paddy coming from neighbouring States in the interest of farmers.

(ix) Need to grant clearance for upgrading the Airport at Nagpur, Maharashtra to a Multi Modal International Hub Airport

[English]

SHRI VILAS MUTTEWAR (Nagpur) : Appreciating the need for the development of a Multi Modal International Hub Airport at Nagpur, the Government agreed to the proposal, in principle, but the final clearance of the project is still awaited by the Government of Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra have urged upon the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to transfer all the assets of the existing Nagpur airport to the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) at a nominal cost of Re. 1 as has been done in the case of Solapur and Kohlapur airports which would facilitate the MADC to execute all the other connected formalities.

The international flights have already started operating from Nagpur airport. It has, therefore, been proposed that this airport might be declared formally as the international airport both for the passenger and cargo and to give liberal permission for landing of international flights under the open sky policy of the Government, pending the upgradation of this airport to a Multi Modal International Hub Airport.

In view of the above, I would urge upon the Government to (a) transfer all the assets of the existing Nagpur airport to MADC, (b) to direct the Airports Authority of India to release the agreed land to the Indian Air Force for their Gujraj project, (c) to declare Nagpur airport as an International Airport and (d) to convey its formal approval to the Government of Maharashtra for the early development of this airport to Multi Modal International Hub Airport.

(x) Need to initiate work on the sanctioned railway projects in West Bengal

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : During the last four and half years, a number of Railway projects were declared for West Bengal. In many cases, the foundation stones were also laid with much fanfare. But in most of the cases, the projects never saw the light of the day. I request the Government to take immediate action to implement all the projects declared so far.

(xi) Need to review floor space index in the Secunderabad Cantonment area with a view to regularise existing commercial and residential buildings in the area

[English]

SHRI RAJAI AH MALYALA (Siddipet) : The Secunderabad Cantonment is highly developed and many housing colonies have come up but the Secunderabad Cantonment Board is not having any master plan for the land use. The measurement for calculation of the Floor Space Index of 1.5 is not practicable and it will create lot of confusion, harassment and mental agony for the poor and middle class families residing there. The land use Floor Space Index in the Cantonment area has to be refixed as per the present and future needs. Hence, I

request the Hon'ble Defence Minister to regularize the existing commercial buildings along with the residential buildings completed five years back. I also urge upon the Minister to accept the request of Secunderbad cantonment Residents Welfare Association to amend the order No. 10(27)/2000 – D (Q and C), Government of India, Ministry of Defence dated 2.4.2003 and regularize all the existing buildings before the order by granting approval and pass such other suitable order in the interest of the poor and middle class people of the Secunderabad Cantonment area.

- (xii) **Need for construction of a bridge on river Saryu at Bidhar Ghat and proper repair and maintenance of Bidhar-Ghanghata-Khalilabad-Karmalni road in Uttar Pradesh under Central Road Fund Scheme**

[Translation]

SHRI BHAL CHANDRA YADAV (Khalilabad) : Sir, Bidhar Ghat-Ghanghata-Khalilabad-Menhdawal-Karmalni road in my parliamentary constituency, Khalilabad, district Sant Kabir Nagar, U.P. is 60 km. Long from one end of district Sant Kabir Nagar to the other. The Shri Ram-Janaki Marg meets this main road at Ghanghata and the National Highway (Lucknow-Gorakhpur road) meets it at Khalilabad. Tehsil headquarters Ghanghata, baba Tameshwarnath dham, tehsil headquarters Khalilabad, district headquarters, Sant Kabir Nagar, Maghar the Nirvan sthal of Sant Kabirdas, Kopia and Anupia the mythological places related to Gautam Budh, tehsil headquarters Menhdawal and Vakhira bird sanctuary, Vakhira etc. are situated along this road. I urge upon the Government to sanction construction of bridge over the river Saryu at Bidharghat. This way, the Bidhar-Khalilabad-Menhdawal-Karmalni road will be directly linked to Ambedkar Nagar, Ajamgarh, Ayodhya, Faizabad, Banaras and Allahabad in the South. Thousands of vehicles ply to different parts of the country via that main road in Sant Kabir Nagar district. This road was badly damaged at a number of points by the floods in 1998.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to construct a bridge over the river Saryu at Bidharghat and reconstruct/

repair the 60 kms long Bidhar-Ghanghata-Khalilabad-Menhdawal-Karmalni road under the central road construction fund scheme.

- (xiii) **Need to ensure proper repair and maintenance of tanks for water harvesting in Hingoli Parliamentary Constituency, Maharashtra**

SHRI SHIVAJIMANE (Hingoli) : Sir, our forefathers used to have ponds and tanks near every village to handle the water crisis and the average rainfall was about 50 inches in those days. But, with the passage of time, due to non-cleansing and lack of proper repair of these tanks, the condition of all the tanks and ponds became bad. The similar is the condition of the reservoirs. In Nanded, Hingoli and Parbhani districts of my parliamentary constituency Hingoli, the condition of ponds and tanks has turned worse due to which water is not available to animals for drinking. Women face great difficulties in washing clothes and the ground water level has considerably gone down. If we do water harvesting through ponds and tanks, then it will be a good way of environmental protection and providing water for animals as well as ground water will be easily available to the people. Today, we are extracting water from a deeper level from where we get water containing fluoride.

Therefore, through this august House, I urge upon the Government to provide one pond in each village of Hingoli, Nanded and Parbhani districts of my parliamentary constituency and start use of the existing tanks after repairing and cleansing them.

- (xiv) **Need to take effective measures to control spiderworm disease affecting coconut crop in Erode district and other parts of Tamil Nadu**

[English]

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (Tiruppattur) : Spiderworm application has greatly affected and spoiled coconut crops in Tamil Nadu, especially Kongu region more particularly the areas in and around Erode district. Already the farmers are facing huge loss due to inadequate irrigation facilities. Spiderworm attack on coconut trees and inadequate irrigation water to cultivate other crops have left farmers

[Shri D. Venugopal]

desperate. Lakhs of coconut trees have withered away in a vast stretch of thousands of acres of coconut groves. It is said that effective and viable steps have not been taken to control these pests that affect coconut cultivators. This must be curbed as a contagious disease which causes enormous loss to agriculturists and our economy. Central Coconut Board must take measures to compensate loss to farmers and help them to put an end to this menace. Considering the loss to our national wealth both the Union Ministries of Agriculture and Commerce must take immediate steps involving the State Governments also.

- (xv) **Need to include Panchganga river at Kolhapur, Maharashtra in the National River Action Plan with a view to provide potable drinking water to the local people**

[English]

SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK (Kolhapur) : My constituency in Kolhapur, Maharashtra is located on the banks of river Panchganga. The people of my constituency of Kolhapur city and hundreds of villages on the bank are dependent on Panchganga river for drinking water purpose. However, this river water is heavily polluted due to insufficient drainage facilities of Kolhapur city. The river water oxygen content as per recent study is zero and BOD is 110 Mg/l. All marine life is slowly getting destroyed.

My repeated attempts to draw the Central Government's attention towards this serious problem have not brought any positive results. The national river action plan has included river Krishna in the plan. Panchganga river is a major tributary of river Krishna and, therefore, inclusion of Panchganga river in the national plan should have been logical.

The revised proposals have been submitted to the Planning Commission by the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation. I request the Central Government to kindly sanction plans and make life of people in my constituency bearable by providing potable drinking water. This is

possible only if the plans of Kolhapur Municipal Corporation are accepted and provision is made to include expenses in the Tenth Plan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

(ii) Re : Business of the House

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, as per decision taken in the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee held on 29th January, 2004, four hours have been allotted for the combined discussion on the Interim Railway Budget for the year 2004-2005, Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) for the year 2004-2005, Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 2003-2004, Demand for Excess Grant (Railways) for the year 2001-2002 and related Appropriation (Railways) Bill.

If the House agrees, there may be no Lunch break. The combined discussion may commence immediately and be concluded by 5 p.m. today. The Minister of Railways may reply after that. After passing of the Demands for Grants on Account, the Supplementary Demands and the Excess Demand, the related Appropriation Bills may be passed.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : There is one more announcement to be made.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am making an announcement. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up General Discussion. Do you want to make your point before this?

(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Sir, at what time will the voting take place? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : Sir, most of the Members from Kamataka gave notices for an Adjournment Motion. The Supreme Court had to issue notice. . . .(Interruptions)

13.12 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let the Papers laid business be over.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : It is already over. Sir, several Adjournment Motion notices have been given. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Has any notice for an Adjournment Motion been accepted? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, having heard the long success story of the Government by the Finance Minister, I would like to say that possibly the Finance Minister could not refer to the things under the cover. The Supreme Court had to intervene and issue notice, to Shri Ananth Kumar, a sitting Member of the House and a former Union Minister, on Rs. 14,500 crore loan of HUDCO. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir,

[English]

If the matter is sub judice, how can it be raised here? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The Bofors issue was also in the Court but the House was allowed to raise it. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : A number of cases are sub-judice in the Delhi High Court, those too will be raised here. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, here is a case of misuse of Rs. 14,500 crore by HUDCO and that too ignoring the regulations. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : We too want to raise here a matter which sub-judice in the Delhi High Court. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Canara) : How could they all the time talk about Bofors in the House. It involved only Rs. 64 crores. Today, we are talking about the misuse of Rs. 14,500 crore. . . .(Interruptions) Of course, the matter was in the Court.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, the issue is sub judice only at that stage. The convention in the House is, in a criminal matter charges are framed and in a civil matter the issue is fixed. Neither the issue has been fixed and nor the charges have been framed but a notice has been issued.

It is the duty of the Minister of Urban Development of today who is heading the Ministry of Urban Development to respond to it because HUDCO is under the Ministry of Urban Development. The loans worth Rs. 5000 crore were sanctioned in one day that too without applying the full rules and regulations of the HUDCO Board. . . . (Interruptions) A single loan amounting to Rs. 54 crore was written off in one day. The respondents have sanctioned Rs. 5000 crore to 35 companies on a single day throwing all rules and regulations to the wind. Adoption of resolution sanctioning loans in the presence of three part-time Directors as against HUDCO rules of approval by 11 Directors is the clear violation of article 14 of the constitution of the Corporation. This act has caused a great loss to the exchequer and resulted in further accumulation of non-performing assets in the country which is already more than Rs. 1 lakh crore.

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, for what are you allowing the hon. Member? Which case's charge is he reading out?

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, first we had UTI scam. Then we had *Tehelka* Scam and now it is HUDCO scam. After so many scams how can Parliament keep quite? I demand that the Minister of Urban Development should come to the House and should respond immediately. . . .(Interruptions) We cannot keep quite on this issue. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Dasmunsi, your Adjournment Motion on this subject has been disallowed by the Speaker.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Karnataka Government is deeply entangled in the Teldgi case. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, one who get money, feels good but who loses it, does not.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, you have given notice of Adjournment Motion on this subject. For that only, I have given you the floor. Your notice of Adjournment Motion has been disallowed by the Speaker.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJILAL SUMAN (Firozabad) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, we too have given a notice of Adjournment Motion. . . .(Interruptions) Yesterday, a DIG has been killed in Srinagar. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, my simple demand was that to clear the mess the Minister of Urban

Development should come to the House and he should make a statement what exactly is the position. It is the right of the House to know this. . . .(Interruptions) You should advise the Government on this. . . .(Interruptions) The Minister should come to the House.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (Mangalore) : The Chair has already given the ruling. How can you rake up the issue again?. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Shri Ananth Kumar is not our enemy. As a Member, he is our friend. We are not individually against Shri Ananth Kumar. But the Minister of Urban Development of today is accountable to the House. . . .(Interruptions) We want to hear the Minister of Urban Development. He should come and explain it. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : When the Chair has already disallowed the Adjournment Motion, how can they raise it now?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Now Shri Ananth Kumar is not answerable to the House. I am concerned with the Minister of Urban Development of today.

[Translation]

What decision has been taken in this matter?

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I was under the impression that it was under adjournment motion. It is in his name. It is not this subject but some other subject. Now that you have already raised the matter in the 'Zero Hour', I have given you the floor. This is a 'Zero Hour' matter.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : There are three notices for adjournment motion. You may disallow them; I do not mind. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You have given it under 'Zero Hour'.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, that is why, I gave the notice for adjournment motion. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA (Mumbai North East) : Sir, how can they raise this matter now?. . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is 'Zero Hour'. I am only disposing it of. There are a number of things to be transacted. I want to just hear them and dispose it of. That is all.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (Kolar) : I have no personal allegations against Shri Anant Kumar. He is good friend of mine. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Fortunately, Shri Anant Kumar is here. I can give him the floor so that he can also reply to this point.

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA : This is 'Zero Hour'. How can he raise this matter now?. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, without giving proper notice, how can matters relating to litigation be raised on the floor of the House?. . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We have got a number of things to dispose of. They have given it under the garb of adjournment motion and I am giving them some time so that the hon. Minister who is here can also reply to their point. Then there are four or five hon. Members also who want to raise matters in the 'Zero Hour'.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : If not the Urban Development Minister, anybody from the Cabinet can reply to this issue. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Dhananjaya Kumar, I will hear you. Do not impose on me like that. He has given a notice and you have not even given a notice.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, without giving a proper notice, how can wild allegations be made against

a sitting Member of the House? They should give prior notice to the concerned Member. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let us not waste the time of the House.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my name is also there. I will also speak.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will call you also, I will call you only when there is silence in the House.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Sir, myself and Shri Basavaraj have given notices on this issue. This is one of the biggest scams in the country. An amount of Rs. 14,500 crore is involved in this scam. There is no doubt that Shri Anant Kumar is my good friend. I am not attacking the Minister personally but the Minister who is responsible for this scam and all the officers who are involved in this scam. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will also not allow you to attack him personally.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : My submission to you is that there has been a blatant misuse of ministerial powers and arbitrary sanctioning of loans in violation of all rules and regulations to the tune of Rs. 14,500 crore from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation during the tenure of the BJP leader Shri Anant Kumar as Union Urban Development Minister. This has been highlighted in the Public Interest Litigation filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, how can they speak without giving a proper notice to the concerned person?. . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No name is to be referred to.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Dhananjaya Kumar, you have to give proper notice. I have already said it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : The PIL, filed in the Supreme Court, based on which notices were served on Shri Anant Kumar and other HUDCO officials, points out that in several of its transactions, the Corporation had not only violated the code of ethics for public undertakings but ignored warnings from several quarters including the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and the RBI in sanctioning loans. . . .*(Interruptions)* The petitioner, the Centre for Public Interest Litigation, includes as its executive Members legal luminaries like. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA : How can this be treated as a 'Zero Hour' issue?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is not a 'Zero Hour' issue. It comes under Adjournment Motion and hence, it has got priority.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : The legal luminaries are F.S. Nariman, K.K. Venugopal, Shanti Bhusan and Anil Diwan. These are the senior luminaries of the Supreme Court who filed the PIL.

The petitioners have also contended that in some glaring instances, the Corporation had acted with total *mala fide* and in an arbitrary manner, completely ignoring the directions of various Central Government officers. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Dhananjaya Kumar, I will give you the floor.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will give you a chance. You are a senior Member.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : The petitioners have also charged that Rs. 550 crore were written off. It is a very

important thing. . . .*(Interruptions)* *(Expunged as ordered by the Chair)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Muniyappa, please conclude.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have allowed Shri G.S. Basavaraj, Shri R.L. Jalappa, Shrimati Margaret Alva, Shri R.S. Patil and Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake to associate themselves with what Shri Muniyappa said.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : On December 20, 2002, HUDCO Board sanctioned loans worth Rs. 5,000 crore. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Muniyappa, please conclude.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, from where is he quoting all this?. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Sir, a Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Supreme Court. . . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : Sir, this was a subject of Adjournment Motion in the morning. The hon. Speaker, said, "Please wait for the 'Zero Hour'. Let the Budget be over".

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is how I have given the floor to him.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : I am only saying that we would like to have the reaction of the Government. This has hit the headlines everywhere. Shri Anantha Kumar is a very good friend. He has issued a legal notice to Shri Janardhan Poojary for having raised this issue. . . . *(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : When the Supreme Court itself has given a notice to Shri Anantha Kumar, there is no meaning of his issuing a legal notice to Shri Janardhan Poojary. It is totally politically motivated. . . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is what is happening. Anybody is giving a notice for Adjournment Motion and then talking.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is now treated as a 'Zero Hour' matter.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : I seek you protection. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You have already raised the matter.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Ramji Lal Suman please.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : The hon. Minister has to answer. He has to reply. He has to come before the House. . . .*(Interruptions)* The Minister present should reply. . . .*(Interruptions)* This is a question of involvement of Rs. 14,500 crore. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Will they make a statement on behalf of the Government tomorrow, if not today?. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I cannot insist the Government. How can I insist the Government.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will remove all objectionable remarks from the records.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI V. DHANAJAYA KUMAR : The name of the Member also. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will remove all objectionable matters that might have gone on record.

*(Interruptions)**

*Not Recorded.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : As such the Adjournment Motion was not allowed. Now, you were allowed to mention it. You have explained it. In the course of your explanation, suppose something objectionable has been said, the Presiding Officer has the right to remove it.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Madam, you have already mentioned about it. I have already said that all objectionable words would be removed from the record.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Shri Satyendra Dubey wrote to the P.M.O. regarding the alround loot and irregularities prevailing in the NHA. The CBI killed the accused in this case. An FIR has been lodged against the CBI. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Government fails to exercise the requisite psychological pressure on the terrorists irrespective of whatever claims the Government may make in that regard. Yesterday, on the occasion of Id, the terrorists shot dead the DIG Mr. Ameen Batt with a silencer-fitted pistol after coming quite close inside a mosque crowded by namazis. It is a very serious incident. The Government claim that they are controlling the terrorists but in fact they do not have any kind of psychological pressure on the terrorists. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHYAM BIHARI MISHRA (Bilhaur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is terror every where in Uttar Pradesh. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mishraji, the session will last for two more days, why are you getting so angry?

SHRI SHYAM BIHARI MISHRA : Sir, I am not getting angry. He is talking about Srinagar. They are not successful in controlling terrorism in Uttar Pradesh where his party is in power. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, he was talking about the 'feel good factor'. Where has his 'feel good factor' gone now?. . . .*(Interruptions)*

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MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All of you, please, sit down. You speak when I call you.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, all I want to submit to you is that the morale of the terrorists is not down at all. The hon. Home Minister should give a reply in this regard.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this is a valid point. Where has their 'feel good factor' gone now which they were talking about? There was a jail breaks in Chandigarh. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will allow you to associate with it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM (Thanjavur) : Sir, I have given notice to raise an important issue. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He has given notice of an Adjournment Motion. After that, you will be getting the chance.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Sir, every day, you are giving chance to these people. I am very rarely raising any issue. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ADHI SHANKAR (Cuddalore) : We came to Parliament at Eight of the Clock in the morning and submitted the 'Zero Hour' notice. It is listed as number one in the list. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Palanimanickam, I am telling you that in the order of preference, Adjournment Motion comes first. You are a Senior Member. You should know about it. After that, you are getting the chance. Why are you becoming so impatient now?

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I have given notice for adjournment motion. It is a fit case for adjournment. It is not a question of Government is failure alone but is a conspiracy by the

Union Government. Shri Satyendra Debey murder case is country's much hyped and shameful incident. Loot is going on in the National Highway Authority of India. Rupees two lakh per kilometre consultancy fee is being charged and extra expenditure to the tune of Rupees twenty thousand crore is being incurred. Rs. Eight crore expenditure per kilometre is shown against the actual expenditure of Rs. 6 crore and the remaining Rs. 2 crore is being looted in the name of consultancy through National Highway Authority of India.

It is being said that Golden Quadrilateral East West and North East corridors are being constructed while the country is being looted in its name. It is not Golden Quadrilateral Scheme but a loot scheme. Satyendra Debey, a famous engineer was an ITI Kanpur product and was recruited under that very scheme. He wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and apprised him of the loot going on therein. Bringing to light the loot and corruption rampant therein he pleaded them not to divulge his name, otherwise he feared he would be killed. Despite that his identity was disclosed through the PMO and Ministry of Surface Transport. The conspirators who were involved in looting got him murdered. It is a shameful incident for the country.

Sir, CBI inquiry was going on and they apprehended two culprits, Shri Shah and Paswan. During interrogation both of the accused named certain Cabinet Ministers. Thereafter the CBI poisoned one of the two accused to death and said it was suicide. The father of that accused who was killed has filed an FIR against the CBI. Those accused were telling the truth. They exposed the scam and the loot going on in the Golden Quadrilateral, East-West Corridor and the North East corridor. They spoke the truth and under a conspiracy one of them was forced to consume poison and was killed. He was fighting for life in the hospital. Media people reached there and questioned him but he could not be saved. It spread such a sensation through out the country that he was telling the truth. He exposed the scams of cabinet Ministers, therefore, he was poisoned to death. His father is in deep agony. What does the Union Government have to explain in this regard whether they will hold a high level inquiry? CBI

inquiry is held and an accused is murdered. The foreign firms and the contractors, are being engaged by the National Highway Authority of India to hush these scams. . . .(Interruptions) What does the Government have to say in this regard, why is it tight lipped the Government must explain whether it intends to hold a high level inquiry in this regard what action the Government is likely to take thereon? . . .(Interruptions) What about the scams? What action would be taken against the CBI?

Sir, I need your protection on adjournment motion, the Government should give some statement in this regard. . . .(Interruptions) Sir, in regard to the one who was poisoned to death and it was said that he committed suicide. . . .(Interruptions) What does the Union Government have to say in this regard? . . .(Interruptions)

Sir, some decision should be given in this regard. . . .(Interruptions) What about the loot the scams occurring therein? . . .(Interruptions) Sir, the bills being shown by the hon. Members are totally correct. "Ho rahi hai loot aur kar rahe hein galat prachar, yeh kar rahe hein mithyachar, bhrashtachar aur galat prachar, yahi hai Bharat Sarkar."

13.37 hrs.

**RE: ALLEGED MISUTILISATION OF FUNDS
BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR ISSUING
ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE MEDIA**

[English]

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM (Thanjavur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I want to bring to the notice of the House, through you, that for the last one week all the newspapers in Tamil Nadu are giving advertisements, in the name of the Government, in favour of the BJP election campaign.

The Cabinet has passed a resolution about the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and sent it to the hon. President. After that, the Government has no right to introduce new schemes or inaugurate any new projects. In the name of new schemes and projects, the Government is giving advertisements of crores and crores of rupees. This is purely misuse of powers. It is unconstitutional and

unethical. In the name of Government, they are giving election advertisements in favour of BJP. . . .(Interruptions)

Now, the original partners of the NDA are not there. This is only a part of the NDA. This is not a Government of the real partners of the NDA.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU THIRUNAVUKKARASAR) : The Government is there.

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Yes, The Government is there but without the real partners of the Government. . . .(Interruptions) Sir, I want to bring it to the notice of the House that the Election Commission has not announced the dates for elections. The Cabinet did not announce the dissolution of the House. But prior to that, the 'super Prime Ministers', one Shri Pramod Mahajan and another Shri Venkaiah Naidu, made the announcement about the dissolution. I do not know in what capacity they have announced the dissolution.

Another announcement has been made about the dates and venues for the elections by the 'super Election Commissioners', one Shri Pramod Mahajan and another Shri Venkaiah Naidu. After these announcements, has this Government any propriety for spending the public money? . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, It is a very serious matter the Planning Commission's fund is being spent on the party's campaigning. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur) : Here is a full-page advertisement. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ADHI SANKAR (Cuddalore) : They have put full-page advertisement. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Do not display it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Sir, it is unconstitutional.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, in the history of Indian democracy, the Planning Commission has been brought on the posters for campaigning. The Government can do it. I do not mind that. But the Government posters include Planning Commission and a photograph of its Deputy Chairman. The Government is shamelessly using Planning Commission for its political purposes. It is shameful in Indian democracy.

I feel that the Minister owes a responsibility to the Parliament to clarify the position. He should condemn it. How has the Planning Commission been brought into the picture for giving advertisements? Is it proper? Has it ever happened in the past?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Sir, there is a full-page advertisement by the Planning Commission. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : It is shameful.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious issue, the Planning Commission's funds are being used for the party's, B.J.P's campaign. . . .
(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI ADHI SANKAR : Sir, here is a full-page advertisement.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Do not display it.

[Translation]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Full-page advertisements are being given in every newspaper. . . .
(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I will not display it. But I seek your indulgence to lay it on the Table of the House for examining its contents. How has the Planning Commission been brought

into the picture for political publicity about the performance of the NDA Government? Is the Planning Commission a part of the publicity campaign? How can it be done?

SHRI A. RAJA (Perambalur) : Sir, the Government has every right to highlight whatever its achievements are. But the Planning Commission is neither a constitutional body nor a statutory body. It is having some advisory role for planning in future. For the first time, the country has seen that the Planning Commission is playing a role in publicity about the Government expenditure and other things.

Sir, I am neither for the BJP, nor for the Congress Party and nor for the DMK. But I would like to seek guidance from the Chair. Should this type of expenditure be incurred on the part of the Planning Commission?. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Sir, thousands of crores of rupees are being spent.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government's funds to the tune of millions of Rupees is being spend on the publicity campaign of the Bhartiya Janata Party. This is no way, the Government should explain. The advertisements are showing the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission as well, it is a very serious matter. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : Sir, as the Members are very agitated on this issue I thought I should respond to it, though it does not strictly fall within the area of my responsibility.

The first point which I would like to make is that in all the achievements of this Government, our friends from the DMK deserve the fullest credit because they have been partners until very recently and all the credit shared by us is fully with them. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : At the end they have given them a certificate also. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious matter. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You wanted the Government to respond. How would it be possible?

(Interruptions)

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Sir, that is as far as the achievements are concerned.

As far as the issue of the Planning Commission issuing advertisements is concerned, I am not aware of any bar or any ban on the Planning Commission from issuing advertisements on its achievements and the achievements of the Government. I do not know why the Members should feel so agitated if the Planning Commission has issued any statement. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : How can they issue such advertisements?. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Why not? Is there a ban? Let them show me a ban on the advertisements to be issued by the Planning Commission. This is absolutely incorrect. They have no issue, that is why they are raising absolutely irrelevant issues. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, this shows his hollowness. I contest the hon. Minister. The planning Commission is an advisory body. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The Government has given its view that any part of the development can be advertised. I do not think there is further room for any debate on this.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH (Arrah) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, in today's Punjab Kesri it is published that BJP have exerted tremendous pressure on its allies. . .

.(Interruptions) It has not taken its allies into confidence during these elections. . . .(Interruptions) Shri George Fernandes who is the convenor of NDA was also kept in the dark. . . .(Interruptions) Choudhary Chautalaji was also kept in the dark. . . .(Interruptions) Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Shri Advaniji has said that our position is the same as it was in 1977. . . .(Interruptions) In 1977 the party in power was voted out and the opposition was voted to power i.e. Mr. Advaniji himself is admitting that the party in power will be voted out and the opposition will be voted to power. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the conventions are being flayed. . . .(Interruptions) Money is being spent. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, how the Planning Commission can say like this. . . .(Interruptions) Public funds are being used for party propaganda. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The Planning Commission has no money for its own expenditure. Will the Planning Commission propogate for NDA?. . . .(Interruptions) Let the name plate of Yojana Bhavan be replaced with the BJP Office. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Whether the earlier Government's have not acted like this. . . .(Interruptions) Whether this has never happened? Who says it has not been done?. . . .(Interruptions) Today the Government of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are doing this. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : No Government has done like this. . . .(Interruptions) They have flayed the conventions. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We are not in a position to know whether it is about development or about achievements because the advertisement is in Tamil.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. VETRISELVAN (Krishnagiri) : Sir, it is in English also. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Now, I have called Shri Basudeb Acharia to make his submission.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. MALAISAMY (Ramanathapuram) : Sir, I am on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is 'Zero Hour'.

SHRI K. MALAISAMY : Sir, they were friends of NDA. How have they suddenly become the foes of NDA and are raising this issue. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Acharia, please speak.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, in the year 1994, in the month of December, a large number of lethal weapons were dropped in the district of Purulia. An aircraft came from abroad and in the dead of night dropped a large number of weapons. Later on the pilots and others who brought these weapons to our country – this has happened for the first time in our country – were arrested. Now, we came to know that the Central Government has passed an order to release the main culprit, Peter Bleach.

This gentleman made a statement three years back that all these weapons were brought to destabilise the Left Front Government of West Bengal.

This statement was made by Peter Bleach three years back. I would like to know from the Government whether an inquiry was conducted by CBI. CBI must have come to the conclusion why all these weapons were brought and were dropped in the district of Purulia, West Bengal. If any inquiry was made, and if CBI has come to the conclusion. I would like to know what was the reason and why this answer was brought. Why, today, when still the case is going on, the main culprit, Peter Bleach is being released from the jail? Thus, this is a very serious matter. The Government owes an explanation to the House why he is being released. I would like to know whether

the Government has inquired into the cause of such incident. I would like to know from the Foreign Affairs Minister, who is present here, why the main culprit is today being released when the case is still going on and the entire country is put in the dark. What has happened to the inquiry? I would like to know about the result of the inquiry. Whereas this gentleman made a statement that they brought the weapons to destabilise the Left Front Government of West Bengal. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara) : Thank you for permitting me to raise a very important matter of my State which is inclusion of Palmolein oil in tariff rate quota and permission to import palmolein. The Government of Gujarat had suggested, vide letter dated 16th January, 2003, to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Food, Minister of Finance and Commerce, for inclusion of Palmolein oil in tariff rate quota of Director-General of Foreign Trade and permission to import 1800 tonnes of Palmolein for distribution to the poor families of PDS. I urge the Union Government to review, consider and accord early approval and sanction for the same thing.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a recent decision by the French Government to impose a ban on the wearing of turbans by the Sikh community living in France has caused deep concern and consternation amongst the Members of the community not only those who are living in France but people of that community all over the world.

For the last two months from different sides there have been representations to this Government to intervene in this matter to ensure that no country, with whom we have friendly relations takes decision which affects the fundamental rights of any person to have his own religious beliefs.

Sir, unfortunately, nothing concrete has been done so far and which is certainly a matter of concern for people in the country here. I would like to know, – since again the hon. Minister of External Affairs is here – whether the matter has been taken up with the French Government and if so, what has been the effects thereof? In case it has not been taken up, it is time that the Government realises

the importance of this matter and pursues the same vigorously with the French Government.

13.34 hrs.

INTERIM BUDGET (RAILWAYS) – GENERAL
DISCUSSION DEMANDS FOR GRANTS ON
ACCOUNT – (RAILWAYS), 2004-2005
DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY
GRANTS – (RAILWAYS) 2003-2004

AND

DEMANDS FOR EXCESS GRANTS –
(RAILWAYS) 2001-2002

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up the General Discussion on Interim Railway Budget for the year 2004-05, Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants on Account Railways for the year 2004-05, discussion and voting on supplementary Demands for Grants Railways for the year 2003-2004 and discussion and voting on Demands for excess grant Railways for the year 2001-02.

Hon. Members present in the House, whose Cut Motions have been circulated, may, if they desire to move their Cut Motions, send slips to the Table within 15 minutes indicating the serial numbers of the Cut Motions they would like to move. Only those Cut Motions will be treated as moved. Discussion now will start.

Motions moved :

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund of India, on Account, for or towards defraying the charges during the year ending 31st day of March, 2005, in respect of the head of Demands shown in the second column thereof – Demand Nos. 1 to 16."

"That the Supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper

be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2004, in respect of the head of demands entered in the second column thereof – Demands Nos. 14, 15 and 16."

"That the respective excess sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund to make good the excess on the respective grants during the year ended on the 31st day of March, 2002, in respect of the following Demands entered in the second column thereof. – Demand No. 15."

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (Sivaganga) :

Thank you Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir. This Budget, even though it is called an Interim Budget, wants to address the need of the poll which is ensuing very quickly. Except that there is diversion of the very purpose about which the hon. Railway Minister has spoken in the last Budget. The very safety of the passengers, the security, the avoidance of the Railway accidents, none of these things was addressed properly. Just for the sake of making some new proposals, making some link expresses and announcing that entire India is going to be connected by this link express numbering about 18. But there was no date even given for that purpose except the Link Express between Bangalore and Delhi. The other 17 categories which were announced were not even given a particular date from which they will operate. On the other hand, very commonly it was said that in this Financial Year itself it will be in proper running position. This shows the uncertainty on the part of the Railway Ministry. But, if necessary, it can be done otherwise it can be postponed after the poll.

In the same way the security is the very purpose for which we are now drawn by entire media after the death of the grand nephew of the hon. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. That incident is one of the highlighted incidents where everyday in the rail travel plenty of people and plenty of youths are dying. We have a lot of Press and media reports showing everyday many of the travellers

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passengers are missing when they are travelling in the train, socially, they are just thrown out of the rail and they are breathing their last for many hours without any help. It is because of this that this thing has to be considered. The Railway track and the Railway movement, everything is the monopoly of the Government and there is no competition. There is nobody to interfere in that. The track, which runs throughout India, which connects the entire nation, is in the hands of the Railway Department. Therefore, none other than the Railway Department is responsible. Once a passenger has taken a ticket and enters the Railway station and when he enters into the train and gets down from another station, and goes out of the station the entire responsibility is in the hands of the Railway Department. They have to assure the security of the individual and also the goods. I would like to suggest what security for the passengers is provided. We are now thinking only about avoiding accidents and making some efforts for that purpose and also postponing the effects also for the future six months by putting in a Committee of the Railway Administration the Human Resource Department and also the other Departments so that some project can be implemented at that time. What about the day-to-day affairs? Can we wait and lose our lives for the future six months? What security measures were taken? The law is also amended and the powers were given to the Railway Security Force to interfere when there is an accident, or when there is a law and order problem inside the premises and the Railway property. The mindset up of The Railway Security Force is only for protecting the Railway properties and not the properties of the passengers or the lives of the passengers. We have to make that the main focus. The security arrangement is for the protection of the lives of the passengers and also the goods which are taken by them.

14.00 hrs.

That aspect is not at all developed in this Budget. Also the focusing has not been given in this Budget. As Members of the Standing Committee and other Committees, whenever we interact with the higher level officials in the Ministry of Railways, we find that they have got the mindset

only to have the colonial system of protecting their own property, that is the property of the Railways. Only for that purpose, the very security forces have been trained. Even the top-level official, the Director-General of the Railway Security Force has got that mindset. Even the Railway Board Members are having that mindset. We noticed this when they are replying to our queries. Is it not high time to see that focussing on this aspect is to be totally changed? The persons who are going as security in the trains including the TTEs should have the basic training of protecting the interests of the passengers. We may be thinking that it is only the work of the local State Government but at the same time the Railways cannot shirk its responsibility. As a public enterprise, it has to protect the interests of the lives of the millions of people who are depending on rail travel daily. The passengers should feel that they are secured while travelling in a train, rather than going on road. It is the Government-owned property. Therefore, when they are travelling in the trains, they should feel that they are protected.

14.02 hrs.

[SHRI P.H. PANDIAN *in the Chair*]

Are we creating any insurance method instead of having the system of getting funds from the Railway finances and other things? There has to be a modern value addition for the passengers, for the security of their lives and also their property. Whenever there is a small incident or a big incident, immediately money should be given instead of their going and claiming through the Railway Board.

I would like to suggest that there should be security persons from Police in plain clothes in the crowded trains. Had they been in the train, surely they would have avoided the incidents such a Shri Mishra's death. The death of Shri Mishra is an eye-opener for the entire country. It is a very sad incident. After knowing that the Prime Minister has gone to participate in the funeral ceremony of Shri Mishra, the local State Government machinery has started its work. Even now they could not find out the guilty. When such is the position, how would the normal people be protected in such situations?

The other one is about employment opportunity, which was awakened by the Railway Ministry's announcement. Millions of people had written the examination throughout India with the ambition that as educated youth they would get employment in the public sector. The rest of the public sector undertakings in the Central Government have been disinvested and there is nobody to protect their interest and the people who are educated in the rural and backward areas. They were having the ambition that they would get a chance to become an employee in the Railway Department. Millions of people had written the examination. A lot of unfortunate things are also happening. Many of the people are canvassing that they would get the employment. But what is happening? In many places in Assam and Bihar, unnecessary things have happened. There has been a law and order problem. Plenty of insecurity has been coming into the mind of the youngsters, which will finally lead to terrorism and other things. What is the solution for that?

The Railways have created an ambition in the mind of the millions of people that they are going to be employed in different categories in the Railways. I would like to know whether the Government has stayed that particular recruitment or they are going to be recruited. What is the purpose of having that examination? Is it a simple examination and getting marks? I also want to know whether there will be interview and whether there will be some other assessment to have the qualified persons recruited in the Railways. Skill is important for railway employees.

From the down, ordinary gatekeeper, to the top-level Board people, they should have the skill and they should have the feeling that they are protecting the huge investment of the Indian Government and also we are helping the biggest enterprise for the millions of the people in the world. Therefore, that aspect has to be taken into consideration and there shall be a final word regarding the employment and recruitment which has already happened. The children of many of the ex-employees, that is, people who have retired or expired, are also to be protected. But the Government and the Ministry of Railways are replying that 'we have got a very small number of

appointments and you have to wait for five years or ten years'. The people who have joined the Ministry of Railways feel that they are secured. They feel that it is their own property and nation's property. Therefore at that time, if an employee meets with an accident or he expires during the course of his own working period, then their children should be recruited and given a chance for employment to protect their family and the future generation of that particular family.

The other point is regarding the traffic. Now, the traffic is exclusively under the domain of the Railways in the entire India, but when we see the Budget proposals and other things, the traffic nowadays is going down. The earnings through the passengers for the current year have gone down by Rs. 160 crore and they have come to Rs. 13,460 crore. In the same way, the other traffic, commercial traffic, also has gone down. What is the reason for it? I want to know whether it is due to the less transportation of diesel, that is, because the petroleum companies have started to have their own pipeline and the transport is reduced; or is it that the service of the Railways is not to the expectation of the people and the people are going by road rather than by rail. Why is there a fall in revenue on that side? We find that the revenue earning through the passenger traffic is also much lower nowadays. What is the reason for it? I want to know whether it is because of poor management or it is because people are travelling without tickets. What is the reason for it? That should also be explained because only through the revenue, an enterprise can be well managed. We find that the borrowing, that is part of the participation of the Government, has very much increased now. It has now increased four-fold. I can quote the figures from 1987 onwards. During the current fiscal year, the Centre's Budget support of Rs. 7,377 crore is expected to finance about 53 per cent of the total Railways' plan size of Rs. 13,918 crore. This is actually more than the Seventh Plan, that is, 42 per cent participation in 1985-86 to 34.5 per cent in 1989-90. Now, in the Ninth Plan it was increased to 50 per cent more. In the Tenth Plan it is going up. I am talking about the participation of the exchequer from the General Budget. Why has that thing happened? If there is a proper corporate management, as we call it now, then

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every Division has to earn more and they should have participated with their own revenue participation. Whatever is the expenditure that has come, that should be earned by them rather than depending on the Central Government to participate in the Plan expenditure also. Now, the four-fold jump of the participation of the Central Government should be reduced. We find correspondingly that the share of the internal resource generation has also steadily fallen from 43 per cent to 35 per cent and to about 25 per cent during the current plan period. We find that about Rs. 3,000 crore is borrowed by the Indian Railways Finance Corporation for a single project, not for any other project.

As a persons representing Tamil Nadu, I requested a number of times that Tiruchirapalli Manamadurai-Rameshwaram route should be made in the name of *Rameshwaram*. We can float a bond and that bond can also follow the Build-Operate-Transfer system.

This scheme should be implemented to link the entire country to the very important place of Rameshwaram. This floating of bond for Rs. 3,000 crore is simply for a single project. Why not that be floated for some other projects also just like the Rameshwaram link from Tiruchirapalli? When there is a deficiency of funds, when there is a bond being floated for this purpose, then why not that be included for so many other projects also so that the revenue will be increased and it can be paid back very quickly?

I find that in the previous year's Budget a lot of concessions were given for Build-Operate-Transfer system. But now they are expecting only Rs. 50 crore on this part. What is the reason for that low expectation? Many of the companies are now linked to the ports also. Many of the production units can taken the produce to the port directly or to even other places so that the earnings can be increased. Instead of having more investments by the Railways, we can ask the private sector to participate in such a way. That reason is also not given in the explanation regarding that scheme.

I would like to focus upon certain other things. One of them is not giving proper priority for agricultural areas

and backward areas. There was a well-focused speech by the hon. Minister when he presented the last Budget that the backward areas will be covered by a new project which will be for five years. But the focus is now given only to the ports and other centres and not to the rural areas. The backward areas should get more attention because the agricultural produce, the produce of small-scale industries and medium industries are transported by rail. Many such people who are having their own units in the rural areas and in the most backward areas, just like in my constituency in Sivaganga, Pudukkottai and Ramanathapuram areas could not get proper attention. But we are now allowing them to have only metre gauge line. I find that getting of money from the open market is also for conversion of the existing lines to broad gauge. Why can this not be spent for giving new lines to backward areas?

The agricultural produce should be transported from one place to another. This is in an open economy. A lot of agricultural produce is now coming up in the backward areas. This produce is now being taken by road with high cost. Instead of that, they can participate in railway transportation and at the same time the Railways can earn more through that way of transportation. The focus on the rural areas and agricultural economy is not at all there in this interim Budget. We feel that we want to give it only to metropolitan areas. Whatever facilities which are given by the Government of India, whether it is four-laning of road facilities or airports or railways, everything is now focused towards cosmopolitan cities. Ninety per cent of the people are living in rural areas and remote places. Their needs are not addressed by giving any of the road or rail or any other such facilities.

Therefore, the Ministry of Railways should pay more attention to this. This is the only exclusive monopoly public enterprise that is now in the hands of the Government of India. We have already given all other things to the private enterprises. Here, we have to concentrate on the point that the rural people are properly catered to by the facilities of this Railways.

I find that the Plan expenditure is now reduced. Why has it been done? It is about 3.5 per cent lower than the

last Revised Estimate and other things. Why have you reduced it? There is a high demand for the Railways. The Railways can earn more. There is no competition through the railway; but there is a competition by road and also by air.

If the corporate management system is properly applied not only for the safety but also for earning revenue, then we will be in the topmost earning slot so that the future of the Railways can have new plans. But there is no new plan at all. We are just utilising the capacity which is already available. The railway lines, which are already available, are now loaded with more trains. There take place a lot of delays while going by the train. But if you allow a separate track for cargoes alone, then there will not be any mixture of passenger trains and the goods trains. Then, the cargo can be very easily transported from one place to another and the distance, which is now covered in a long period, can be covered in a shorter period. That can also be made as a separate project so that we can earn quickly through that method of having exclusive tracks for carrying cargo. But we are not concentrating on that. On the other hand, every tonne of cargo earns less now-a-days. The revised revenue target for this period is also lowered by 2.5 per cent. Therefore, the total picture of the Interim Budget (Railways) is focussed upon the elections, and not upon building new tracks, and using the regular tracks, which are already built up.

For the past so many years, we were focussing that the Railways should be a viable enterprise and it should service people also. Now, we are derailing it by way of putting popular things, without building the infrastructure. The old lines are not replaced and the old metre gauge lines are not converted into broad gauge line. There should be an exercise on war-footing to convert metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines. Then only the economy of the backward districts can be built up and development of the rural areas can take place.

The youth and also the rural people are expecting to depend upon the Railways, but now we feel that many of the stations are being closed down and many of the people

are asked to go to the metropolies. We are happy that now there are available from Delhi to a particular State Capital non-stop trains. Will it be the same thing for villages? Hundreds of stations are now closed down. Now, we can see many of the stories telling about small stations with single Station Master and one Helper. Now, those stations are going down in the history. They are going to be closed down. It is a very pathetic situation now.

Every village loves the train and it was a symbol of integration of India. When we see a train, we feel that it is an Indian train; we do not feel that it is a train of a particular area. Therefore, I would request the hon. Railway Minister that closing of the stations should also be re-looked into and if there is a possibility, and if there are more new towns coming up nearby and more utility is there, then those closed stations should also be re-opened and the services, which should be given to the ordinary people, should be again made available for those people.

I find totally that the Budget which was presented last year is not followed now. The very heart of the Budget is now missing. What we are seeing is only a paper tiger. Many of the committees were constituted. Many of the proposals were given without any date simply because we are waiting for the election day.

Cut Motions

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : I beg to move :

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD RAILWAY BOARD (PAGES 01.01.01.-01.02.01) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

25. Need to provide sufficient allocations for and to expedite the work regarding Tanur-Guruvayur Railway line (Southern Railways).
26. Need to re-route the proposed Tanur-Guruvayur Railway line to avoid thickly populated areas and uprooting of house-holds, etc.
27. Need to set up a separate zone for Railways in Kerala.
28. Need to start coastal Railways in Kerala.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : I beg to move :
 THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCE AND SERVICES ON RAILWAY (PAGES 03.01.01-03.03.01) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

29. Need to check increasing insecurity in Rail travel.
30. Need to make improvements in all the Stations from Ferook to Kuttippuram (Southern Railways, Kerala).

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : I beg to move :
 THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF PERMANENT WAY AND WORKS (PAGES 04.01.01-04.03.01) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

31. Need to repair old Rail bridges in Kerala.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I beg to move :
 THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD RAILWAY BOARD (PAGES 01.01.01-01.02.01) BE REDUCED TO RE. 1.

32. Failure to check railway accidents.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I beg to move :
 THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD RAILWAY BOARD (PAGES 01.01.01-01.02.01) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

33. Need to complete Damodar River Railway from Bankura to Chachai Station.
34. Need to modernize Bankura Railway Station.
35. Need to provide stoppage of Bhubaneswar New Delhi Rajdhani Express (2443/2444) at Purulia Station.
36. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling of Bolpur-Ahmedpur railway line.
37. Need to provide upper class coaches in up and down Darbhanga Sealdah Express.

38. Need to ensure timely running of train (315/316) Howrah Chakradharpur Passenger.
39. Need to provide AC coaches by (315/316) Howrah Chakradharpur Passenger.
40. Need to provide stoppage of Purulia Howrah Express at Onda Gram between Bankura and Bishnupur.
41. Need to run Patna-Cochin train from Patna to Cochin 3 days a week.
42. Need to modernize the railway workshop at Kharagpur
43. Need to increase special quota in sleeper class from 2 to 4 in (2815/2816) Puri-New Delhi Express at Adra Station.
44. Need to construct a VIP lounge at Bankura Railway Station.
45. Need to strengthen security in trains to check the incidents of theft.
46. Need to increase reservation quota for Purulia and Asansol stations in different trains.
47. Need to increase reservation quota for Asansol and Bankura stations in Patna-Cochin Express.
48. Need to improve condition of railway track from Azimganj to Nalhati.
49. Need to introduce Howrah-Mumbai Express via Kharagpur-Midnapur, Bankura and Purulia in South Eastern Railway.
50. Need to increase the acquisition of Electric Locomotives by the Railways.
51. Need to increase the acquisition of wagons by the Railways.
52. Need to achieve the target of wagon purchase by the Railways during the year 2004-2005.
53. Need to modernize the Railway Institute Auditorium at Rampurhat.

54. Need to re-examine the proposal of halt at Narrah between Kustaur and Bagalia.
55. Need to ensure stoppage of Mail/Express trains at Aluabari, Dalkhola and Mecheda.
56. Need to construct and increase the number of goods sheds on the Howrah Station.
57. Need to construct four double discharge platforms at Howrah Station.
58. Need to ensure increase in employment by filling vacant posts and restricting downsizing.
59. Need to expedite the work of Metro Rail and Circular Rail.
60. Need to restart train services in Andal-Palasthali railway line and also restart Chaitanya Express to Nabadwip.
61. Need to construct railway terminal at Chitpur by Railways and ensure rehabilitation of land losers.
62. Need to ensure completion of work new terminal at Shalimar and Paddapukur and also to construct new terminal at Majherhat.
63. Need to convert Naihati Rail Yard to a new terminal.
64. Need to either set-up a disposal system for freight transport at Howrah Station by the Railways or hand over adequate land to the State Government for this work.
65. Need to start disposal system at Dum Dum Junction and other railway stations and ensure rehabilitation of railway hawkers by the Railways.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I beg to move :

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCE AND SERVICES OF RAILWAYS (PAGES 03.01.01-03.03.01) BE REDUCED TO RE. 1.

66. Failure to ensure safety to the railway passengers.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I beg to move :
THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD ASSETS-ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND REPLACEMENT (PAGES 16.01.01-16.04.04) BE REDUCED TO RE. 1.

67. Failure to complete renewal of railway tracks throughout the country.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I beg to move :

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD ASSETS-ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND REPLACEMENT (PAGES 16.01.01-16.04.04) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

68. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling of Guskara-Bolpur railway line.

69. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling Bandel-Jirat rail-way line.

70. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling of Tarakeswar-Sheoraphuli railway line.

71. Need to increase allocation of funds for New Maynaguri-Jogighopa New railway line.

72. Need to increase allocation of funds for Tarakeswar-Bishnupur New railway line.

73. Need to increase allocation of funds for Rampurhat-Mandar Hill New railway line.

74. Need increase allocation of funds for Howrah-Amta BG New railway line.

75. Need to increase allocation of funds for Tamluk-Digha New railway line.

76. Need to increase allocation of funds for Gauge Conversion of Bankura Damodar Railway.

77. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling of Kalinarayanpur-Krishnanagar-Shantipur New railway line up to Chartala.

78. Need to increase allocation of funds for doubling of Barasat-Husnabad railway line.

[Shri Basu Deb Acharia]

79. Need to improve drinking water facility and toilet at Bankura railway station.
80. Need to provide drinking water facility and toilet at all Stations of Adra-Khargapur section.
81. Need to provide railway medical services facility at Bankura Station.
82. Need to provide bedroll facility in first class in train nos. 315/316.
83. Need to construct foot over-bridge at Bandel station in Howrah Division of Eastern Railway.
84. Need to construct a new level crossing at Chandanpur near the Chandanpur Railway Station on the Howrah-Bardhaman Cord line.
85. Need to arrange Physicians in long route Express/Mail Trains.
86. Need for extension of new line from Tamluk-Kanathi up to Baleswar.
87. Need to allocate funds for Bankpura-Mukutmanipur new railway line.
88. Need to allocate funds for Baonchandi-Khana new railway line.
89. Need to allocate funds for Purulia-Jhargram new railway line.
90. Need to allocate funds for Gajal-Raiganj new railway line.
91. Need to allocate funds for Sealdah-Nayjat new railway line.
92. Need to set up a new railway division at Siliguri.
93. Need to expedite completion of road over-bridges at Dalkhola-Dankuni-Madhyamgram-Barasat-Barakpur-Habra-Bagnan-Kanchrapara.
94. Need to set up a new railway station at Ragavpur between Purulia-Kotsila.
95. Need for doubling railway line between Burdwan-Katwa, Katwa-Ajimganj and Santipur-Nabadeep.
96. Need for electrification of lines from Siliguri-NJP-Alipurduar, Krishnanagar-Lalgola, Andal-Sainthia and Kalna-Farrakha.
97. Need to modernize the double railway line via Mecheda to Haldia.
98. Need to extend the Bankura Damodar rail line to Raniganj via Mehia-Durlavpur and also conversion of the line to broad gauge.
99. Need to allocate sufficient funds and to expedite work for timely completion of New Mainaguri-Jogighopa railway line.
100. Need to complete the work of Howrah-Amta and Chapadanga-Shiyakhala railway line.
101. Need to extend the Metro rail from Dum Dum to Barrackpore.
102. Need to construct rail-bridge in Nasipur-Azimganj section and also ensure repairing work of Jubli bridge and other bridges in Naihati-Bandel line.

[English]

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (Mangalore) : Hon. Chairman, I rise in support of the initiatives taken by the hon. Minister for Railways for the year 2004-2005. I also congratulate him for presenting a Budget which has created history of sorts. Sir, for a long time, in this House, we have heard lengthy speeches by the earlier Ministers for Railways, making hollow promises, which could not be fulfilled.

The present hon. Railway Minister has taken a bold step in presenting a 'Status Paper' – as far back as in the year 1998-1999 – before this House. He has addressed the nation from the floor of this House to draw the attention of the people of this country towards the enormous task that is laid before the Indian Railways. Sir, he has the distinction of bringing the Indian Railway system back

on track, which was derailed for a long time. I must congratulate him for this.

Sir, my friend across. Shri Sudarsana Natchiappan has been trying to make some comments by stating that the claims made by the hon. Railway Minister are hollow and that he has tried to present a Budget of some sorts with an eye on the elections. But, unfortunately, I would say that we see here in the House that practically almost the entire Opposition Benches are empty. It shows that they are not evincing any interest in this Railway Budget or his own people are not supporting him.

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (Sivaganga) :
The Treasury Benches are also empty. Actually, they are entirely empty.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : I would take it this way that the entire Opposition is fully satisfied with the proposals made by the hon. Minister in the Budget for the year 2004-2005, including the Chair.

Sir, I must also congratulate the hon. Railway Minister for the steady progress made by the Indian Railways, as was envisaged in the 'Status Paper'. He has made a bold statement on the floor of this House that : "Now, we have taken a firm decision that no more popular projects will be announced, and we will strive to complete the works on hand well in time." It has been possible.

Sir, I had the good fortune of getting myself associated with the famous Justice Khanna Committee during the year 1998-1999. We made an in-depth study about the improvements that had taken place with regard to the safety systems world-over like how the largest Railway systems adopt measures to provide better safety for the Railways. etc. Sir, after the Government received the Report from that Committee – we are all very much pleased to see – the hon. Prime Minister at the behest of the Railway Ministry has taken the bold step of constituting a Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 17,000 crore. This fund would be utilised, in phases, for improving the entire Railway system like renewal of tracks, providing better signalling facilities, better passenger amenities, etc.

Sir, actually we are now feeling an improvement in the entire system as regards the passengers are concerned. No doubt, there is also a mention about the safety aspect in the Budget speech of the hon. Railway Minister for the year 2004-2005. It is presumed, and people have started getting a feeling that this is the Government that acts as per their statements on the floor of the House. So, whatever they have said, and whatever targets have been set for completion of the works like doubling, gauge conversion, electrification, track renewals, etc. have been completed well within the time and in some cases some of the projects have been completed ahead of the schedule also. This credit definitely goes to the entire Indian Railways. No doubt, much of the credit will have to be given to the head of the Indian Railway system, that is, the hon. Railway Minister.

Sir, the announcement of the *National Rail Vikas Yojana* is another step in the right direction initiated by this Government under the dynamic leadership of hon. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

An amount of Rs. 15,000 crore has been provided for *Rail Vikas Yojana*. By trying to connect Udhampur with Jammu, the people in the Northern-most part of this country have started getting a feeling that their dreams have come true. This is the biggest achievement that any Government can claim of. After Independence, for the first time, this Government has tried to establish rail-link to the farthestmost places either in the North or in the North-East. You mention any part of the country wherever the facilities were required on the basis of requirement and also keeping in mind the task of the Indian Railways in providing a better network throughout the length and breadth of the country, they have taken correct decision. Once a decision is taken, immediately we see follow up action which is very quick that adequate funding is also provided.

The Government has also tried to involve the State Government because we have been hearing on the floor of this House that every Member used to rise in his place and make a demand that he wanted to get a new train or a new railway line in his constituency or would demand

[Shri V. Dhananjaya Kumar]

that a particular line may be converted into broad gauge or a new railway station be provided in-between or he would ask for some halt at some stations, of the long running trains. But without yielding to such pressure tactics, I would boldly say that this Government has taken the initiative keeping in view the growth of the system in the entire nation.

Rail is really the best link. Through the Railways, we can provide the best link in the entire country. So, I must again congratulate the Railway Minister for achieving the uphill task which was set before him when he assumed Office.

Regarding performance, the saying is in the deeds of the person. We can always see that. Here is a Minister who made announcements on the floor of this House; in the mid-year, again there was an appraisal as to how we are performing. Today, we have seen that he has exceeded the performance revenue-wise, by increase in the passenger earning and also by increase in the transportation of goods.

Side by side, care has been taken to improve the passenger amenities. Whenever we have requested, he has been good enough to immediately sanction it on the basis of the necessity and requirement. Even our friends from the other side would fully appreciate it.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAVIN RASHTRAPAL (Patan) : Nothing has been done in our case.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : You always keep on standing and saying something here.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please address the Chair.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : I was only telling them that here is a good opportunity. After 55 years of Independence, for the first time, we have got this opportunity. Here is a Railway Minister with a correct vision

of improving the Indian Railways and he is working for us. We must take the best advantage of that. We should make correct approaches. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL) : This is the problem.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : This is what I am going to say.

[English]

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF (Bangalore North) : Vision has come after 55 years!

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : At least that must be appreciated.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : All were blind so far and the vision has come just now! When you talk, you should talk with substance.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Shri Jaffer Sharief has been the leader of the Indian Railways for five years and we have seen what has been achieved during his time!

How hollow promises were being made on the floor of the House and nothing could be achieved! Today, we are really experiencing the trains rolling on the rails. Better movement of goods and better passenger amenities are being provided. Changes are being brought in with the change of time. Today, you can get reservation over a phone. Could this have been imagined earlier? A few years ago, the passengers had to suffer waiting in long queues. Even after waiting for the whole day, the passengers were not in a position to get the reservation. Today, sitting in a corner, using the cell phone, one can get reservation. What an improvement in the Indian Railways system! This must be appreciated. That is what I have been trying to place before the House. We can make healthy criticism but we should not envy the developments achieved.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : What is the percentage of the people having the cell phones? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Today, what is the cost of acquiring a cell phone? It used to be between Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000.

[Translation]

Today you can get a cell phone at the cost of Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000. . . .(Interruptions) You can have a cell phone at the cost of Rs. 200 from the Reliance which is Dheeru Bhai Ambanis Company. Sir, he wants to derail me. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : We are discussing Railways and not Telecommunications.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : I am sorry, Sir. We will have to augment the revenue of the Indian Railways if we want to perform better. The hon. Railway Minister had well thought of it also. How many trains have been introduced during the course of last year, 2003-2004? Never, in the entire history of the Indian Railways, such a vast number of trains as during the year 2003-2004, have been introduced. New trains running from South to North and East to West-throughout the length and breadth of the country – providing better facilities to the passengers have been introduced. This must be appreciated. Added to that, this year the hon. Railway Minister, keeping in pace with the thinking of the hon. Prime Minister of establishing contacts with the remote parts of the country, has introduced Sampark Kranti Express. Eighteen of such Express trains will be introduced. I am fortunate because first of such trains will start from my State. It will run from Bangalore to New Delhi. It will be inaugurated on the 8th of February. It is a direct train. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPTAR (Borackpore) : Service is poor. . . .(Interruptions) It takes much time in connecting. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR : It is for the common man. . . .(Interruptions) This service will also be extended to Kolkata and West Bengal. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

This will provide better travelling facilities for a common man. That is why these *Sampark Kranti Express* trains are being introduced.

Sir, the total traffic receipts are estimated at Rs. 44,482 crore which is 3.2 per cent more than the traffic earnings for the previous year. The Railway Minister is right in making such an estimate because he has exceeded the target fixed for the year 2003-04, both in the Passenger earnings and also earnings from goods traffic.

Naturally he is entitled to make higher claims. He has been humble in saying that he is only asking our support for the expenditure in the coming four months. All credit should go to him that for the last three years successively in a row, no additional burden has been put on the passengers. Without increasing either the passenger fare or the freight, he has achieved all this. At least, this must be appreciated and supported.

We have seen in the past that every other Railway Minister, whenever new demands were coming up, had tried to increase both the passenger fare as well as freights. By collecting more revenue, they have been able to provide some of the facilities that were being requested by the hon. Members. So this special credit should be given to the hon. Railway Minister because without putting additional burden, in the ever-expanding Indian Railway system he is improving the whole system, he is giving attention to every sector, and he is giving utmost importance to the safety aspect. Now we can count the number of railway accidents. All this cannot be attributed to the faults in the system alone. There is an element of human error also. What I am trying to submit is that nevertheless, the hon. Railway Minister has taken care to give special attention for providing better safety to the passengers. He has also taken care of the Railway employees by making additional provisions for the pension fund. He has taken care of their welfare and well-being also.

[Shri V. Dhananjay Kumar]

We have always been hearing so many complaints from the other side that this Government has not created new jobs. In the Indian Railways, today bold initiatives have been taken in recruiting class III and IV employees in a big way. For the first time, he has tried to make the system so transparent that in separate zones, you have Recruitment Boards. Now there is an opportunity for the local people to get employment. That must be appreciated. He has tried to improve the system by making better safety provisions for passengers and by getting the Act amended and giving special rights to the Railway Protection Force. Very important steps have been taken by the hon. Minister.

So, we fully support the initiatives taken by the hon. Railway Ministers in the Budget 2004-05. I wish and hope that the same Railway Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar would be presenting a full Budget after the General Elections, 2004 and he will come out with flying colours. I am sure, there is no doubt in the minds of the people of this country that NDA will come back. Under the dynamic leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the entire nation will progress further. The Indian Railways will make their contribution in achieving further progress in the entire nation. Once again, I lend my full support for the initiatives taken by the hon. Minister in the Budget for the year 2004-05. I thank you for the opportunity given to me.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, the Interim Railway Budget presented by my friend, Shri Nitish Kumar has failed to impress any section of the people of our country.

Everyday, we have been receiving telegrams, fax messages and representations that industries are not getting the benefits. Cement industries in my area are on the verge of closure as rakes are not available to bring clinkers for the production of cement. The same is the position with the steel plants and also thermal power plants. I got a message from my constituency yesterday that the stock of coal in Santaldih Thermal Power Plant has been reduced to three days from one week. This is mainly because wagons are not available and rakes are not available. There is shortage of wagons and rakes. As

a result of this, there has been less production in the industries also.

The situation is not what has been described by the Railway Minister that everything is going on well in the Railways. Physical performance is all right. We can see that it has surpassed the target in the freight traffic and also the passenger traffic. Although there is scope for further growth, we are producing more than 300 million tonnes of coal. The target which has been fixed for the Railways to carry coal is 248 million tonnes. It is only eight or nine million tonnes more than what the Railways will carry this year. From 187 million tonnes, it has gone to 238 million tonnes of coal. Coal is the bulk traffic for the Railways. If the production is 320 or 330 million tonnes and if the Railways can carry up to 275 million tonnes of coal, thereby they can earn much more than what is the earning of the Railways today.

The problem is non-availability of wagons. The turnaround time has also been increased during this period. So, the situation is not well in the Railways. Why is the earning less? After nationalisation of freight charges last year, why has there been less earning in the Railways by Rs. 700 crore in the freight traffic, and Rs. 180 crore in passenger traffic? As a result of that, the Railways has kept Rs. 13425 crore from the Plan outlay for internal generation for the next year. Last year, it was Rs. 13,918 crore. Why was the Plan outlay for the Railways for the next year reduced by about Rs. 500 crore?

This is mainly because the internal revenue generation of the Railways will be even lesser next year than what they have earned as internal revenue generation in the current year. It will be lesser next year. This is mainly due to lesser earning in the freight traffic as well as in passenger traffic. The growth of 2.5 per cent in the passenger traffic is not at all satisfactory. In the past, the minimum growth in the passenger traffic was six per cent. Why has there been lower growth rate when we have been asking the Government to attract more traffic? In 1950-51, the Railways used to carry eighty per cent of the freight traffic and seventy per cent of the passenger traffic. Today, it is just the reverse. Why is Railways not in a position to

attract the traffic which is now being carried by the road sector? What are the hurdles and problems? If you see, over the last several years the growth rate is almost the same. It is two to three per cent or three to four per cent. That problem has to be addressed.

In the Indian Railways, capacity is not being increased. Today, the average speed of goods train is only 24.7 kms. Still we have metre gauge system in the Indian Railways. The percentage of metre gauge system today is almost twenty per cent. This is the position even after the gauge conversion. The efficiency in the metre gauge system is gradually reducing.

The net tonne kilometre per wagon, per day, which was 441 kilometre in 2001-02 has been reduced to 369 kilometre in 2002-03. The same is the case with the speed of all goods trains. In the case of broad gauge it is 24.4 kilometre. In 2001-02, there has been a marginal increase. It has increased to 24.74 kilometre. In the case of metre gauge, it has been further reduced from 18.4 kilometre to 18.2 kilometre. If we can increase the speed of both the freight as well as passenger trains by ten per cent, we will be able to increase our capacity. Thereby the Indian Railways will be in a position to carry more freight.

In spite of Special Railway Safety Fund, twenty per cent of our track is over-aged. Unless this entire twenty per cent of the over-aged track is renewed in a time-bound manner, unless the entire over-aged track is eliminated and replaced by a new track, unless the over-aged rolling stock, like wagons, locomotives and coaches is replaced by new wagons, locomotives and coaches, capacity of the Indian Railways cannot be increased.

Sir, today, I was coming by Sealdah Rajdhani Express. It was on time up to Aligarh Station. Then, I was informed that there was some defect in a locomotive and so the line was blocked. As a result of that, all the Rajdhani Express trains were delayed by more than two hours. This is not happening as a rare incident. This is happening everyday. So, the need of the hour is that priority should be given to increase the speed of our trains. The average speed of both freight as well as passenger trains should be increased and thereby the Railways can increase their

freight traffic. By increasing the freight traffic, the earning of the Railway can also be increased and the Railways will not have to depend on market borrowing. Today, the market borrowing of the Railways is more than Rs. 3,000 crore and gradually it is becoming a burden on our Railways.

Sir, why is there a shortage of wagons? Why are the industries not getting wagons? I would like to know whether supply of wagons has been made as per the orders which have been placed to wagon manufacturing units. I have made a proposal to the Railways that if the Railways could make certain public sector wagon manufacturing units as their captive units, then supply of wagons to the Railways could be guaranteed. I have seen a news item in the newspaper that the Railway Minister has sent a team to one of the Railway's units located at Mokama, which falls under his constituency, which has been closed for the last six months and not a single wagon has been produced from there. As against this, M/s Burn Standard's position is far better. It is now manufacturing two wagons per day and they are planning to increase it to four wagons per days. He has sent a team to Mokama, but my proposal to make M/s Burn Standard of Bumpur as a captive unit has been rejected by the Railways as per the reply given by the Railway Minister while replying to one of my questions.

Sir, in an Interim Budget or a Vote on Account, we did not expect any announcement for introduction of new project and new trains, because a Vote on Account is presented just before a Lok Sabha election. But the Railway Minister has chosen to announce introduction of 18 new trains called Sampark Kranti Express from Delhi to various State Capitals. When he could announce introduction of 18 new trains, why did he not include the persistent demands which have been there for a long time? Why have those demands not been included in the Vote on Account which has been presented by the Railway Minister?

Sir, last year, the Minister announced introduction of 56 new trains. Out of that, only 40 trains could be introduced so far.

[Shri Basu Deb Acharia]

Now 18 new trains have been announced. After the elections, when the new Government comes into power and a full Budget is presented, they would also make certain announcements for introduction of new trains. The Indian Railways run the coach manufacturing units, namely ICF and RCF. Last year, we pointed out that the order placed with these two units was less than the order placed a year before. Where from will the coaches come?

As a result of this, what is happening? The passengers travelling in local trains or short distance trains are the worst sufferers. If you travel by conventional coaches in the local trains, you would find that the condition of the coaches is very bad. Thirty per cent of the conventional coaches, particularly in the local trains, are over-aged. Four years back, I was informed that even 30 per cent of the coaches in the EMU trains, which are running in the Sealdah as well as the Howrah suburban sections, are over-aged. These coaches are being used. There is no plan to replace these over-aged coaches.

We are talking of safety. A fund has been created. We have been asking since long that our signalling system is very old. We are still carrying on with 'token' signalling system. In order to make it tokenless to increase efficiency of the Railways and of the train services, modernisation of the signalling system is required. We are still having three or four types of signalling system. Unless our entire signalling system is modernised, we cannot have efficiency in the Railways.

Adra is an important junction and is having Divisional Headquarters. The three sections which connect Adra are : Adra-Purulia, Adra-Asansol and Adra-Gomoh. For five kilometres, it is still having a single line section for the last 60-70 years. There is no plan to convert it into a double-line section. In the Midnapore-Kharagpur section, there is also a bottleneck. There is one station Purulia. It is an important district. Only one platform can be utilised there. When a train comes from Adra side, there is no crossover to utilise the three platforms. As a result of that, if one train is delayed, the other trains also get delayed. These are detained at various wayside stations. When I asked how

much fund is required. I was told that only Rs. 1 crore are required to provide a crossover to utilise the three platforms.

Last year, we demanded that when Mumbai has five or six terminal stations, Delhi has four, Chennai has three, why should Kolkata have only two terminal stations? The Minister was kind enough not only to announce but also sanction one terminal station at Chitpur and another mega terminal at Padma Pukur. Because of congestion at the Howrah Bridge, as well as the new bridge, there is a proposal to provide a terminal at Majerhat. If a terminal is provided at Majerhat, the trains from South-Eastern Railway could come directly to Kolkata.

15.00 hrs

Thereby the passengers can avail of the facility of Circular Railway. The Railway land is also there and this will definitely help the dispersal of passengers, which is a problem in the Howrah station. There is one abandoned goods-shed and the hon. Minister knows about this. It is not being utilised and today only one goods-shed is being utilised for pre-paid taxi stand. They can construct four new platforms within one year. For this not much funds are required because the Railways have their own land. These are short-term solutions for the Howrah station. The Railways has its own land and if these platforms are built the congestion problem at the Howrah station can be solved to some extent. This is our experience with regard to South-Eastern trains. Almost all the trains are detained in the wayside station, either at Santragachi or some other station. So, this problem can be solved by constructing three-four new platforms at the abandoned goods-shed. This can be a short-term solution.

But the long-term solution will be a coaching terminal at Majirhaat. Last year, the hon. Minister has announced a policy in regard to extension of some projects.

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are two more speakers from your party.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, I will complete it within five-six minutes. I have three-four important points to make.

This year also the hon. Minister has stated to connect the distant areas, the areas which are not connected with the Railways. In 1996, the Railways conducted a survey to connect Jhargram with Purulia. The entire area is inhabited by tribal community. There are forest and hilly areas. If Jhargram is connected with Purulia, this will help the tribals living in that area. There are some people who have never seen the Railways. Ninety per cent of the people of that area are tribals. This project will be a socially desirable project.

The hon. Minister has stated this and we have also been demanding that the pending projects should be completed. We know that there are certain projects which are sanctioned with a political motive. But when a project is sanctioned, it should be completed within a time-bound period. We know, certain projects which were sanctioned 20 years back are still continuing. Every year, a sum of Rs. 1 crore or Rs. 2 crore is being sanctioned for that.

The hon. Minister has announced that all the pending projects should be completed within five year and for that a sum of Rs. 20,000 crore will be needed. But the question is where from this fund will come? He has not stated that, This is one of the priority areas. There are certain district headquarters, which are not connected with the Railways and there are so many pending projects also.

Last year, 2001-02, our achievement was that only 187 kms. of new lines were constructed.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) :
What was the practice in the past?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I remember earlier it was 40 kilometers too. But 180 kilometer is not sufficient.

[English]

Sir, China is constructing 1,000 kms. of new railway lines per year. They had 11,000 kms. in 1949 and today they have 70,000 kms. We had 53,000 kms. in 1947 and today we have 63,000 kms.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : It will increase.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : This is our achievement. So, at least 1000 kms. Every year the new line should be constructed.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : More than that should be constructed.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : It is good. Sir, when we are talking of high speed trains the trains which were serving interior areas, local areas and rural areas like Pandabeshar and Palasthali may not earn profit but it is required, it is needed. Shri Nitish Kumar, you have withdrawn train services between Pandabeshar and Palasthali two years back. The people of Birbhum are demanding that. Earlier, there were two-three pairs of trains that have now been withdrawn. Recently I had been to Nadia district. There is still a narrow gauge line. West Bengal has three narrow gauge lines. One is Burdwan-Katwa, another is Ahmedpur-Katwa and the third is Shantipur-Nabadip Dham. Nabadip Dham is the place of Chaitanya Deb. What you have done Shri Nitish Kumar Ji is that you have withdrawn the stoppages in wayside three stations. Sir, it is a narrow gauge line connecting Shantipur – a famous place for textiles – with Nabadip Dham. Our demand is this 35 km. Narrow gauge should be converted into a broad gauge line and Chaitanya Express in the name of Chaitanya Deb should be introduced from Sealda to Nabadip Dham. The stoppages which have been withdrawn should be restored.

[Translation]

A mention of Chaitanyadeb was made here.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : It doesn't matter.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : We do not talk against. Earlier that was the communism. Earlier people used to say. Now the name is 'samta' which means equality but there is no equality in deeds rather there is disparity.

[Shri Basu Deb Acharia]

[English]

Sir, while replying to the debate of Assam violence.

[Translation]

In response to the questions raised by us it was said that a proposal in regard to recruitment policy will be brought later on. He had sought time to discuss it with all and to amend it. Whether something has been done about the Railway gangmen who are on hunger strike. He is aware that they have some genuine problems. A proposal in this regard was put up by us three years ago in DLDW.

[English]

In Southern Railway these 3000 boys are there since 1996 none of the apprentices was recruited in your Railways.

[Translation]

The situation is good as it has been done upto the year 2002 and during his tenure too.

There are hardly 6000 or 7000 of these boys. They are skilled. You need safety category staff. Sir, one gangman was recruited without training. He was killed 15 days back in my area because he was not trained, he was not skilled.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. You have taken more than half an hour.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : When you have readymade staff, skilled who has spent two years in the Railway; and through interviews they are selected for apprenticeship. What is the difficulty in recruiting them?

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are speaking on behalf of your Party The other two Members will not get time.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : In Group 'D' we hope that the Minister of Railways will make an announcement we hope that the Minister of today to the effect that rules in regard to appointment thereof will be amended. He has stated that there will be 18,000 employment opportunities after 5 years, not today, when all the pending projects will be constructed.

He has also stated that within one year, there has been a reduction in railway staff by 30,000. He has stated about the welfare of the staff. Sir, what is happening? In my area, Aadra, there are three railway schools. Now, the Railway asked all the teachers to give option whether they want to serve in departments other than the school. Why? There is a proposal to close down all the schools or hand over them to some other organisation. The Railways do not want to run these schools or hospitals.

Sir, how much the doctors in Homeopathy, Ayurvedic and Indian system of medicine in Railways are getting? After the Committee on Petitions has recommended, their salary has been increased by Rs. 2,000. The doctors in Homeopathy, Ayurvedic and Indian system of medicine in the Central Government as well as in the State Government Health Services are at par with Allopathy doctors but only in the Railways they are getting only Rs. 4,000 or Rs. 2,000 per month. How many are there? There are only 141. . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, you conclude.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I will take only one minute.

Sir, there is a court judgement that the erstwhile coal and ash handling workers are to be absorbed in the Railways. I have written a number of letters in regard to coal and ash workers who are engaged in coal and steam loco shed. I have not received any reply to them. It is not a fact that the court at Santragachi has not given any judgement in their favour. My request is that whatever judgement that the court has given, that should be complied with. They are the poor workers who worked as contract workers in the Railways for 20, 25 and 30 years.

Sir, while concluding, I would like to say that the Railway should take sincere efforts to increase its capacity, increase its earning and increase its freight traffic where there is a possibility by attracting more traffic from the road sector.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for providing

me an opportunity to speak on the rail budget. I would like to thank the Minister of Railways for presenting a good interim budget for the year 2004-2005. I extend my support to this budget on behalf of Shiv Sena party.

Sir, it is a very good budget. The Minister of Railways has presented an interim budget here but hoping that we would present the final budget also when this Government comes to forming the new Government, I would like to place here a few demands of our Marathwada region. It is a very encouraging budget. The Minister of Railways has presented a very good budget. In this budget 17 new Sampark Kranti Express Trains from the capital Delhi to various places in the country have been introduced. The first Sampark Kranti Express train is going to be introduced on the 8th of this month itself. For this I would like to thank the Minister of Railways a lot.

In the supplementary demands for grants of the Railways, the Minister had stated about the safety in trains. In order to deal with mishappenings in the trains, provisions were made in the budget. Besides that when the people wait in the queues for getting rail reservation many a time something unusually happens. To solve this problem, making arrangements for rail reservation through Mobile would be beneficial for all of us. We are entering the Modern era and as such it was quite essential to do so at this juncture.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, my parliamentary Constituency falls in Marathwada region. After independence, even a kilometer stretch of rail line has not been added to rail track of this region. For this purpose, agitations have been launched on a number of occasions. Even freedom fighters like Shri Govindbhai shroff, advocates, doctors etc. had to go to jail on this issue and only then this work could be started. I would like to say with full confidence that NDA Government has done a big job. Our Shiv Sena party has launched agitations on a number of occasions, people have gone to jails, incidents of ransacking have also occurred but nothing was done during the regime of the previous Governments. Now the present Government of this 13th Lok Sabha has done a lot of work under the leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji. Five projects

namely Mundkhed-Adilabad (102 kilometer) Secundrabad-Mundkhed-Janakpet, Akola-Poorna, Meeraj-Latur and Ahmednagar-beed-Parlibajinath are under construction in Marathwada region. My friends Shri Pramod Mahajan and Shri Gopinath Munde of Maharashtra belong to this region. Hon'ble Minister of Railways has given 301 crore rupees for these projects whereas rupees 949 crore are required for our region. Hon'ble Minister of Railways had said that these works would cost rupees 20 thousand crore. I would like that one thousand crore rupees be provided for this region so that the problem of our region could be solved. If the works are not completed during the tenure of our Government, then at least directions be issued to the forthcoming Government so that budget worth 949 crore rupees could be allocated for this region. I would thank the hon'ble Minister for allocating 115 crore rupees last time and rupees 117 crore thereafter. Through you, I would request the Government to release the remaining amount at an early date.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon'ble Minister has mentioned about the modern station in his budget speech. I also want to place a very vital demand. Hon'ble Minister had also visited Chanderpur in my constituency and he had laid the foundation stone there. It is a very important place from the point of view of tourism.

Sir, at that time he had made an announcement which was welcomed in the entire Maharashtra. As per the said announcement it was stated that this region would be covered under the Central Railway instead of the South Central Railway. It was said that it could only be possible when it is decided by the Cabinet. All the Members of Parliament belonging to our Shiv Sena Party had met the Prime Minister. We also met you quite frequently. You have done a lot for our State. You have helped us a lot. This is our old demand. If you announce two-four days before the code-of-conduct is implemented, we shall be highly obliged to you. It is our most important demand. Please accord it the utmost priority. Please do fulfil it.

Sir, earlier, we were living in Hyderabad State but when States were created on linguistic basis the entire Marathi speaking region was merged with Maharashtra.

[Shri Chandrakant Khaire]

Then there was a great agitation for the joint Maharashtra State. After that Nanded division was created. This move was also cheerfully welcomed but that did not become a full fledged State. Thereafter an agitation was again launched and then that division was made a full fledged division. All this has happened during your tenure. As such I repeatedly request you that Dharmavaram and mutged should be brought under Nanded division. Myself and all the legislators of that region have their links with Mumbai. As such the entire region should be linked to Mumbai.

Sir, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh from Bihar is sitting here. During the previous days, there has been a great agitation in Bihar and Bengal on the issue of recruitment in the railway. Then the same situation was also created in our State but we did not think it proper to bother you. It is our long pending demand. We did not bothered you at the time when agitation was going on. So, for that you would appreciate us. It is our old demand. I request you that you would recognize it.

Sir, as for as introduction of new trains is concerned, I had reminded you in this regard on that day also. You had assured us that you would see to it. The authorities of the South Central Railway have met the Members of Parliament of our party twice. General Manager, Railway of my area informed us that he would write to the Railway-Board. When I took up the matter with the Director, Railway Board, I was informed that nothing in writing has been received. In this way, he was not prepared to tell me anything. When I revealed my identity that I am an M.P. and leader of Shiv Sena Party in Lok Sabha and Leader of NDA too, I was given an audience. Thus, I want to submit that the officers of Railway Board are least bothered about the demands of the people or the expansion of Railway network. A people's representative, an M.P. or a Minister can understand and appreciate the need of providing railway facilities to the public but an officer cannot even visualize all that. They are not at all interested in providing facilities to the people. Sir, I made a request, to introduce a train between Tirupati and Shirdi because

many people travel to Tirupati and Shirdi because many people travel to Tirupati from Maharashtra and vice versa to have glimpse (Darshan) of Shirdi be Sai Baba. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You never offer us 'prasad' of Lord Hanumanji.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Sir, because of the grace of Lord Hanumanji all of us are here. I will arrange 'prasad' tomorrow itself. I hope the demand of lakhs of people of my constituency will be met by introducing a train from Manmad to Tirupati. I have given an assurance to the people that train will be introduced before Lok Sabha elections. Therefore, request for early introduction of the train.

Sir, two of our demands are very important. In my constituency many people are engaged in trade. Shri Kashi Ram Ranaji who is a leader from Gujarat, is also present here. Maharashtra and Gujarat have close ties since time immemorial. Traditionally Marathwada had enjoyed even more closer ties with Gujarat. Gujarat and Maharashtra have enjoyed close trade ties and also ties in other respects. I want that a train be introduced between Nanded and Ahmedabad i.e. – between Nanded and Karnawati city. I request the hon. Minister of Railways through Shri Kashi Ram Ranaji to ponder over delve on it seriously. I, therefore, request the Government to link Nanded to Ahmedabad by railway and fulfil the long pending demand of the people.

Sir, a train called Sachkhand Express runs between Marathwada i.e. Nanded and Amritsar. This train is run five days in a week. I request the Government to make the train a daily train. There is a grand Gurudwara of Guru Govind Singh in Nanded and also a famous Gurudwara in Amritsar. So, this train should be run on all seven days. I would like to request that the way Amritsar has been linked to Nanded, similarly a train should be introduced on these lines to link Nanded to Patna Saheb Gurudwara. Here many hon. MPs from Patna are also present. Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singhji is present here too. He must be in agreement with me that Nanded Saheb must be linked with Patna by train.

A major religious ceremony of Sikh Community is to be organized in Nanded in 2008. We should start making efforts right now, then only people will have convenience in visiting the spot. This is a long pending demand. There has been an agitation going on since 1965 and political bigwigs have also agitated for connecting Sholapur, Tuljapur, Beed, Paithan, Sambhaji-Nagar, Siloda and Ajanta to Jalgaon. It should be made part of the Five Year Plan by conducting survey as early as possible which would be a great achievement.

Sir, hon. Atalji had announced yesterday only that every village will be connected with train. Villages are being connected by roads under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana then why the work of connecting by rail can not take place at district taluka level? Your co-operation is also requested in this regard. Work has commenced in Rotegoan and Puntaba on small scale. Jalna, Khamgoan, Pari to Ambejogah, Gangakhed to Khandhar should also be included in the Ninth Five Year Plan. Shri Adsul Saheb is present here and this area falls in his Constituency. We demand introduction of a new train from Manmad to Tirupati for the convenience of the people. We placed the demand before you and it was acceded to too. Before elections the train should be introduced. You have released rupees four and half crore for Sambhaji Nagar Model Station and inaugurated it too for which I thank you a lot on my own behalf and on people's behalf. There are two small stations namely Mukundwadi and Chikalthana. We seek a little bit of help of yours so as to facilitate the progress of the five star industrial area, Shendra because shortly it is going to be declared 'special economic-zone', which will be of a great help to both of these stations.

Sir, one of the important matter for me is that railway recruitment boards should be set up in Maharashtra on linguistic basis and regional language should be accorded priority therein as has been demanded by Shiv Sena Chief Bala Saheb Thakre. There was a complaint during the examination held by Mumbai Railway Recruitment Board that Shiv Sena people thrashed the Biharis, but nothing of that sort took place. Assam and Bihar witnessed more such incidents. Hon. Thakreji has demanded that too and States should be created on linguistic basis. Regional

Railway Recruitment Boards should be set up in which Marathi speaking people should be accorded priority in Maharashtra and in Bihar and Gujarat too linguistic people should be accorded priority in the matter of employment. This is our demand so that everybody gets justice.

15.28 hrs.

[SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA *in the Chair*]

Sir, I am thankful to you for stalling the process of recruitment at the instance of hon. Thakreji, otherwise at several places, the violent incidents could have occurred. This would pave the way for justice to Marathi people in the days to come. Under the leadership of hon. Balasaheb Thakre at least 20,000 vacancies are likely to be published which will do justice to the Marathi speaking people. I would like to thank you for meeting the demand of introducing Nandigram Express which was pending for several years. But it seems to me that nobody takes care of our sentiments because we are interested in Nanded South Central Railway while the trains are introduced from the Central Railways. All the hon. Members want to be in touch with Mumbai and want their areas of come within the administrative control of Central Railway and not South Central Railway.

You have commissioned that terminal and named it after Lok Manya Tilak, but a train should also be introduced between Lokmanya Tilak Terminal and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal. I do not understand why the Central railway platform has not been completed which has been under construction for years. If it is completed, we will be able to apprise the people of the achievements made during the NDA regime. I can enumerate the many achievements because the NDA Government and hon. Nitish Kumarji has done a very good job for which I am thankful to them. Since the network of railway has marked it's presence everywhere, so some problems are bound to be there. You have done a good job by arranging a meeting between the GM and MPs, and also have arranged a meeting with the DRM to solve the problem then and there itself. We want you to arrange such a meeting with the Chairman of the Railway Board too to apprise him of the fact as to how many problems have been sorted out.

[Shri Chandrakant Khaire]

The manner you have handled the railways, our expectations have shot up since then. I thank you for presenting a good interim budget and hope that you will render us more and more help.

[English]

DR. V. SAROJA (Rasipuram) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of my Party and on behalf of my leader, hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. I rise here to support the interim Railway Budget. At the outset I congratulate the hon. Prime Minister of India and the hon. Minister of Railways for bringing in new services particularly the service which is going to be the first of its kind connecting all State capitals to the national capital. On behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu and on behalf of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, I thank the hon. Minister of Railways for sanctioning the Tamil Nadu Sampark Kranti Express from New Delhi to Madurai.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar) : When the Budget is being acclaimed by all then why not pass it with voice vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is not being universally acclaimed.

[English]

DR. V. SAROJA : Having said this, let me confine myself to the issues, the chronic problems that have not been solved that I have presented during the twelfth and thirteenth Lok Sabhas. We have been requesting for a separate railway division for Salem which has not been considered. I request the hon. Minister to consider this favourably. I am given to understand that the plea being taken is that the project will not be a viable one. I would request the hon. Minister to take a critical evaluation along with the representatives of the people of that States as well as the local public along with the Government officials so that we can have the ground reality known. You can

take stock of the project and how it will be viable. I may assure you and I am confident that this project will be a viable project because this connects the whole of North India to southern parts of Tamil Nadu. I hope that the hon. Minister of Railways, in his reply, will give me a positive reply.

A few days back I received a letter from the Divisional Railway Manager, Palghat saying that the General Manager of Southern Railway is going to take an inspection of Coimbatore-Salem-Joiarpet section on 5th and 6th of February, 2004 and we were asked to communicate or personally represent any problems or any projects which will be considered favourably. I request the hon. Minister of Railways that he may direct the General Manager, Southern Railway to have the inspection of Athur in Salem district. It has been promised even during the last Session that the inauguration of Athur-Salem sector of the Salem-Cuddalore gauge conversion will be inaugurated by the then Minister of State for Railways.

It is not being done. So, I would request that at least now before the dissolution of the 13th Lok Sabha this should be done. If not, at least, after the dissolution it should be done in my presence so that the people of that area will appreciate the efforts that I have taken for this project. I also request the hon. Railway Minister to communicate to me regarding the instructions that you have given to the GM Southern Railway, Chennai and when the inauguration will be done, etc. The inauguration at Atur must be done in my presence, as it was promised earlier.

Coming to the Salem-Karur new Railway line, I am given to understand that the project has come to a standstill because of the land acquisition at Namakkal. I would like to hear from the hon. Minister about the actions that have been taken to settle the issue regarding the land acquisition, and when it will be completed. I am asking this because – during the inauguration of this project at Karur during 1999 – the hon. Railway Minister had promised that this project would be completed within three years. But not even 1/3rd of the work is completed. The public is facing many problems without the train facility. The

money that we have already spent on this project is not being utilised properly, since the project has not been completed.

Sir, the Yercaud Express – which is an express running during night time from Chennai to Erode – is the only regular night train for both the ways. As of now, there are 90 sitting accommodations available in it. At 11:15 pm, the train leaves from Chennai and the sitting accommodation is not very convenient for the public travelling on this route. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to convert the sitting accommodation into sleeper coaches so that the public will be benefited. If possible, you can have extra coaches – which should be sleeper coaches – attached to it. This has been the long-standing demand of the people of that area also.

Sir, I have been travelling in the same train because it is very convenient for those Members of Parliament who are from Arakkonam, and Dharmapuri districts, Salem district, Erode, Coimbatore, Ooty, etc. This train has one of the sub-standard coaches. The bedrolls are not clean, paper-thin pillows are being supplied, sanitation inside the coaches and the toilets are not being maintained properly, the curtains are not cleaned, etc. In fact, on days when we are not sitting in the House we happen to go there every alternate day, but the pleasure of travelling by that train is totally compromised and it is denied to the people travelling on that route. So, please look into it so that you give proper accommodation and passenger friendly atmosphere to the people of that area, and they also get benefited.

Sir, the computerised booking was inaugurated by the then State Minister for Railways at Namakkal about three months back. but till now it has not started to function. The hon. Minister may kindly look into it also.

I would request the hon. Minister to have a Satellite Booking Office at Salem bus stand, so that the people of that area and the surrounding areas will have the comfort of a Computerized Booking Office at Atur and Namakkal, if it is started immediately. Otherwise, even without having any train facility, people coming from Atur are being forced to go to Virudachalam for booking tickets.

There is a need to construct a foot-overbridge on the other platform in Sankaridurg Railway Station. As of now, there is a foot-overbridge on one side of the railway station. People coming from the other side still are forced to cross the railway track. The Government may consider this.

There is a need to construct a flyover on the State Highway near Ulunderpet railway station. That is a main Highway connecting Chennai and Trichy. Whenever a train passes the highway, road-users are forced to sit in waiting for more than half an hour. We have to have a flyover in that area.

I made a request for setting up a railway station at Kallakurichi on Salem-Cuddalore Gauge Conversion project in my constituency. My request has not been considered so far. I would once again request that it be considered.

We have to have a Coastal Railways from Chennai to Kanyakumari. That will not only facilitate the travelling public in the area but would also attract tourists to many areas lying by railway line.

The hon. Prime Minister yesterday inaugurated the North-South Corridor at Kanyakumari. I congratulate him for having done that. The railway line I am suggesting now would form a parallel route and it will help establish close links from other areas in the South to Chennai. This will also form a viable project for this sector.

So many projects are being sanctioned but none is being completed. Will the Government work out modalities in such way that all the pending projects are completed? The Government has to take up schemes which can be completed within the stipulated period of time. Budget allocation should also be done accordingly so that the projects are completed in time for the benefit of public. Otherwise, the Government has been giving some money which is not enough for the project to be completed. As a result of that, the money sanctioned is not being utilised for the benefit of the people.

I request the Government to, at least by the end of the 10th five-year Plan, prioritise the schemes and projects

[Dr. V. Saroja]

so that you will be able to complete the schemes which are already there.

There is a need to introduce self-printed ticket machines system in the Central Railway Station at Chennai, and stations at Trichy, Madurai, Coimbatore and Salem in the Southern Railway.

I request the hon. Minister to introduce a superfast train from Salem to Tirupati to ensure smooth movement of travelling public. People in large numbers visit Tirupati from Salem frequently. They are now finding the journey very difficult in the absence of a superfast train. I request the Government to consider this request.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI (Tiruchirappalli) : There has been discrimination against Tamil Nadu with regard to railways for a long time. This has to be wiped out.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I strongly support the interim Rail Budget presented by the hon. Minister of Railways. At present the atmosphere in the country is very good and the NDA Government under the leadership of Shri Vajpayee is making every effort for over all development of the country. The feel good factor which has emerged in the country has been reflected in this Rail Budget also. In fact trains are the nerves through which circulates blood of national integrity. There is no doubt that trains contribute to national integration. In this context I would like to quote a poet.

"Bulbul ki Zindagi hai chamn ki babhar par,
Hindustan ki Zindagi hai Railway ki rafter par"

Railways is the biggest organisation of the nation in the public sector. At present about sixteen lakh people are employed in Railways which is making efforts to link the country from east to west and north to south. A number of welfare measures have been announced in the interim Budget presented by the hon. Minister of Railways which shows that the NDA Government is concerned about the welfare of the people of the country.

In spite of announcing a number of new projects, the hon. Minister of Railways has not increased the passenger fare. It is a welcome step and all have heaved a sigh of relief. There is no hike in the freight charges. A short while ago my friend from Congress was saying that this is just a paper tiger. I do not know how it seems a paper tiger to him. I think this Rail Budget is based on facts and in fact this Rail Budget has been presented keeping in view the welfare of the common people.

General elections are round the corner. Elections were bound to be held. In the wake of elections, of anything is done in the country for betterment, I think it would not be proper to say that

[English]

This is an election budget.

[Translation]

In fact it is a people friendly budget made for the welfare of the people and country. That is why passenger fare and freight charges have not been hiked despite all this. We are witnessing that four to six lane road network from east to west and north to south is being strengthened to nurture and strengthen national integrity. Air travel facility is expanding. Journey be it by road or by air is becoming cheaper. In order to compete with cheaper air and road journey and to face the challenges emerged as a result thereof the hon. Minister of railways has announced 18 new superfast trains namely 'Sampark Kranti Express' equipped with all the modern facilities. I think it is a big thing. One can guess as to what is going to happen during the next five years.

[English]

'Coming events cast their shadows before'.

[Translation]

It can be imagine as to what the NDA Government intend to do.

Sir, there will be information revolution in our country with introduction of these 18 new express trains equipped

with facilities. Efforts are being made to connect these trains with information technology. Efforts are being made to provide internet, mobile phone, reservation facility and all other new facilities in these trains. 18 major cities of the country will be connected to the national capital Delhi. It will be just like air travel. Express high ways are being constructed. Similarly it will be a revolutionary change in railway sector. Till now the responsibility of passenger safety and that of railway property was assigned to RPF but now the responsibility of streamlining the responsibility of safety of railway passengers has been assigned to G.R.P. We have been listening since long from the Congress administration that power of GRP would be enhanced as well those of RPF but a number of Minister of Railways took over but the responsibility which ought to have been assigned to RPF could not be assigned to it. I would like to thank Shri Nitish Kumarji that he could realise the importance of RPF and assigned the responsibility of streamlining the safety system of railways to it.

Sir, for the convenience of the people providing for reservation through internet and on mobile phone is a revolutionary step. The 'Tatkal Reservation' which was available only for some trains will be extended to other general trains as well. It will be a big thing. I am thankful to the hon. Minister of Railways. There is no doubt that with introduction of mobile and internet in reservation and several other computerised facilities inconveniences experienced in trains will be mitigated to a great extent.

Besides the information regarding trains running late would be available on our mobile phones through the SMS mentioning the cause of delay like fog etc. This would save the time of passengers. Hence the move should be appreciated.

The device to prevent accidents is being installed for the first time and equipments are also being installed to further improve the signalling system and there has been an improvements in that. And we expect that this would help checking the train accidents in future.

It's a matter of great satisfaction that there has been an increase of three percent in the passenger traffic this

year compared to last year and similarly there has been an increase of two crore tonnes in the freight traffic. It is also commendable that targets have been fixed for the expansion of Railways.

Allocation of Rs. 20,000 crore has been made to connect remote areas with railway network. I think this is a revolutionary step. The NDA Government is trying to take the rail line from Udhampur to Srinagar in phases, which is a dream project, for which the Hon. Minister deserves congratulations. About 16 lakh people are employed in the Railways, this way and that way. As per the Prime Minister's scheme more people are proposed to be provided with employment in the railways. The provision of providing employment to 18,000 person on permanent basis and indirect employment to 55,000 persons has been made in the interim budget. This step also deserve applause.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, finally I would like to touch upon two-three local issues. At present Rajasthan is the largest State topographically. The development of Rajasthan is not in consonance with the topographical situation of the State, Although, the NDA Government has done a lot for the expansion of railways in Rajasthan. There is only one rail line for Udaipur and Chittor from Ajmer. Udaipur is a city of lakes and also an important tourist spot. The conversion work on this sector is at a snail's pace. More allocation should be made for the purpose. The hon. Railway Minister had sanctioned rail line to connect Ajmer with Pushkar, the work on that had also begun but the pace of work is very slow. I would like to request the Government to immediately complete the work of the said line because it is associated with the religious sentiments of people. People there want that a train should be introduced from Pushkar upto Hardwar, Uttaranchal which could connect both the pilgrim places. There is a belief in Hindu religion that goes like this. Pilgrimage to Pushkar is considered as the ultimate in Hindu mythology.

Railways contribute a lot to national integration. Hon. Railway Minister has announced about introducing of new Sampark Kranti Express under the Rail Sampark Yojana for which Rs. 20,000 crore have been provided and he

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

has also assured of creating new employment avenues for which I would like to thank him. The railways have experienced structural changes under the aegis of NDA Government.

I will conclude after making one more point. There has been a mention of railway bridges too in this budget. My submission is that old bridges should also be surveyed. A provision to replace old tracks should be made to avoid untoward incidents. Apart from this there is also a need to grant permission to use vacant land around railway tracks for commercial purposes. This would add to the railway's revenue.

There is also a need to add unreserved coaches to the trains passing through rural areas to facilitate the rural folk. With these words, I conclude my speech.

SHRI BAL KRISHNA CHAUHAN (Ghosi) : Hon. Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me time to take part in the discussion on the interim rail budget. This interim rail budget for the year 2004-2005 does not provide detailed information. Uttar Pradesh has been ignored while extending rail facilities. Every year a demand for this is raised. The newly introduced Sampark Kranti Express trains should have been started from the backward districts of Poorvanchal because these districts are very thickly populated. The people there toil for a livelihood. They are mostly landless, so there should be a better transport facility for them. I would also like to draw your attention to the Supplementary Demand for the year 2003-2004. I had also requested in the last budget that the meter gauge in some of the rail sections of the north-east railway such as the 58 kilometers from Aurihar-Jaunpur and the 35 kms. from Indora-Dohrighat should be converted into broad gauge. But in this supplementary demand the Aurihar-Jaunpur gauge conversion has been taken which I would like to read out "Due to the gauge conversion of Varanasi-Bhatni and Aurihar-Chhapra sections, the Aurihar-Jaunpur section in the north-east railway has been left with meter gauge. The Petitions Committee of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha in its 18th report have recommended that the survey

report regarding gauge conversion of the Aurihar-Jaunpur section should be updated immediately and the related proposal should be sent to the Planning Commission for their approval and to start the project in the current year itself." In view of this, I would like to ask whether no section other than the Aurihar-Jaunpur section has been left with meter gauge. I met and wrote to the hon. Minister a number of times to convert the 35 kms meter gauge Indora-Dohrighat line to broad gauge. There is no other rail section in the whole India which has five stations and all the line are in the town area. Indora station falls on the main road in the Adri town area. Then comes the Kopaganj station which also is in the town area. Ghosi is also a town area station followed by Amila station and Dohrighat terminus station. Besides, the people have repeatedly been demanding for laying new rail lines. New rail line from Dohrighat to Sahjanwa-Gorakhpur should be laid. The survey in this regard has also been conducted but the Railway Board has shelved this. And in this process of shelving, the work related to broad gauge conversion is yet to be cleared.

16.00 hrs.

It is said about this rail line that it is no longer profit making. Old town areas fall on this section but these five stations are being neglected which is resulting in public resentment. The last few months have also witnessed public agitations, Chakka jams and hunger strikes. Through you, I urge upon the Government to take immediate action to solve this problem. There is no justification to this that the Minister of Railways has provided Rs. 14 crores for rail tracks repair. The reason for this is that there is only one rail bus in the area and that too, remains out of order for twenty days in a month. In the name of rail renewal 90 pound lines have been brought while they can be used in laying broad gauge lines. What are the reasons behind spending Rs. 14 crores out of the hard earned money of the public for rail renewal. Besides, this rail section is being neglected also because its work is being given to contractors. This is also a reason for public resentment. I urge upon the Government to accord the status of full fledged stations to these stations.

Sir, in the last budget only the train was introduced between Azamgarh and Delhi which is not able to cater to the needs. In this regard, a request was made also to the hon. Prime Minister also. He said that the Minister of Railways should accept this. Mau is only 40 kms from Azamgarh where all the facilities are available. This is the centre of world famous sarees. The technical staff from Mau Station have to run the trains at Azamgarh as there is no facilities. As a result of this the said train has never reached Delhi in time till date. The train has been taking three days instead of two days to reach Delhi. It needs the Government's attention. Besides, railway is very important from the view point of social harmony and integrity. Railway is the lifeline of our country so facilities should be provided equally and uniformly. I urge upon the hon. Minister of Railways to take into consideration all these points and take immediate action to fulfil the demands of the people.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajanj, Bihar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Shri Raghuvansh Prasad ji has rightly said that we do not have to make a speech, we only have to thank the Minister of Railways. I want to say that we want to thank the Minister of Railways not because he is a leader of our party but because he has successfully shouldered the responsibility entrusted to him by the hon. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Sir, as far as the railway works are concerned, the Ministry of Railways have sanctioned projects work of Rs. 43 thousand crore approximately including new lines, gauge conversion, doubling of railway tracks, electrification and metro projects. We agree that for want of funds the projects are not progressing at the pace at which these should be. But we should agree that the people of the country are thanking Shri Nitish Kumarji, our Railway Minister and Shri Raghuvansh Prasadji will also thank him if he gets his turn and I would also like to be present in the House to hear him. They are thinking him because with the new schemes, the railways are growing at a faster pace. The most important thing is that the announcement made by the Minister of Railways, in the House or outside the House, did not remain mere announcement, it got

translated into reality. Therefore, the people of the country are thankful to him.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Whenever there is any mishap or accident, they just shun it.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : I do not want to pass comments but in Bihar, whenever they see a fast running train they remember Shri Nitish Kumarji and whenever they experience jerks on dilapidated roads in villages, they remember Lalu Prasadji. Such is the condition in Bihar.

The Ministry of Railways have started looking into the shortcomings in the system, whenever they find any - for example they have made 'Rail Kavach' and 'Raksha Kavach' to stop train collisions. For this, they have carried out survey of 1737 kms. They have evolved a new way of avoiding collisions by introducing 'Rail Kavachs'. Similarly, the GRP do not act in proper way in the cases of crimes on trains, this is a fact. The State Governments also depute such police officials to GRP whom they wish to punish. They are sent to GRP as that is a shunting post. Petty incidents are not enquired into, nor any action is taken on such petty incidents. Now, the Ministry of Railways have handed over this task to the RPF. They will take action against the accused after investigations and will be taken to court for trial. If the RPF is able to prove the offence, the court will sentence the culprit. The process of reforms is on like that.

Similarly, as far as the question of improvements in the old railway projects is concerned, the Minister of Railways have announced that the work on Jammu-Udhampur railway line is likely to commence soon. This will be an example for the country. Owing to different incidents, Jammu and Kashmir has been cut off from the mainstream since independence. He has taken a major step to bring that area in the main stream. Earlier, when the rural people happened to purchase rail tickets, they had wait in long queues. The touts charged them. Today, at every railway station in the country, even in rural areas, the computerised reservation facility is available. Now the passenger can purchase railway tickets from any station ,

[Shri Prabhunath Singh]

of their choice. The Minister of Railways has announced that the tickets will be delivered at home. For this, we are congratulating the Minister of Railways.

The Minister of Railways laid foundation of the bridge at Sonapur. I also had to go there but I go late. But that time he had left from there. I met the people at Sonapur. They told me that they had also given a memorandum to the hon. Minister. It is requested in the memorandum to construct the bridge a bit away from the proposed site which is also a railway land. Sonapur has a fair of Asia fame. There everything is traded including livestock. People from outside also visit this place once in year. The land belonging to farmers is likely to be covered under this bridge project. This will have an adverse impact on the fair. Perhaps the Government have ordered the officers to take a fresh look into this proposal. I would like to request the Minister to kindly look into it personally. If there is no problem in shifting the bridge, then it should be shifted.

Raghuvansh Babu is saying that the work has been done. This is a fact. Some area of my constituency is rural and people of this area are poor and weak.

Earlier rural folks neither had any exposure to the outside world nor people from outside could ever commute to these places. This way they never had any contact with the outside world. Throughout their life they remained confined to their place of birth, they had never heard the railway engine whistle. Today I would like to thank hon. Minister of Railways and would express my gratitude to hon. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee for their approval to a new Railway line to this area. I had requested the Planning Commission on several occasions but the file used to be reverted each time. I made relentless efforts and finally Maharajganj-Masrakh railway line was given approval after repeated requests to hon. Prime Minister besides the hon. Minister of Railways. I on behalf of the people of my constituency express gratitude to both of them. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat now. You have got your line.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am

not making any speech, I would like to make only one or two submissions. I would like to tell you that hon. Minister of Railways visited Ribilganj(?) where a demand to construct a railway yard was made by the public. Hon. Railway Minister had given us an assurance of favourable consideration. I feel that officers of the Railway department are doing something in that direction. I would like the hon. Minister of Railway to execute an order so that work could be started with immediate effect. In addition to this I am asking for a railway school for my backward constituency in Bihar on the lines of one being run in Dehradoon. Land can be provide to the hon. Railway Minister. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no school in Danapur?

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : But there is no school like the Dehradoon one not even in Danapur. We want the one like in Dehradoon. There is abundant land in Maharajganj. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. You may take your seat.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, should we not talk about education, I am saying that there is enough land in Maharajganj where setting up a school on the lines of Dehradoon would be a boon for Bihar.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, with these words, I would conclude by thanking the hon. Minister of Railways on behalf of the people of Bihar for the efforts made by him.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (Berhampore, West Bengal) : Sir, the hon. Railway Minister has presented a Vote on Account amounting to more than Rs. 26,000 crore to run the Railways for another four months. It does not require any genius to discover the sole objective of presenting the Vote on Account. The intention is to influence the results in the impending polls. Soon after the placement of the Interim Budget, the hon. Minister has claimed to the Press that it is a 'feel cheerful' factor. Soon, this Government will realise that it is not a 'feel cheerful'

factor, but it is rather a 'feel tearful' factor.

He has also claimed that this budget is businesslike. Yes, it should be so because the Railways cannot evade its commercial perspective while presenting the budget. In this context, I would like to refer a quotation from Lever Hulme. He said: "Nothing can be greater than business, however small it may be, that is governed by conscience and nothing can be more meaner and petty, however large it may be, that is governed without honesty and brotherhood." Paraphrasing the same, I would like to say that nothing can be more ridiculous than the far-fetched proposals made by the Minister when they are intended to woo the electorate.

Sir, right from the beginning, the Interim Budget has attempted to eulogise the hon. Prime Minister, the only unique selling proposition of the NDA conglomerate. However, this Government has not even indulged in uttering any remorse to the disastrous incidents that took place in Assam, the ethnic flare up which even took a toll of many innocent lives. But for the bold administrative measures taken by the Government of Assam, the situation could have snowballed into catastrophic dimensions. Even the grand nephew of our hon. Prime Minister was thrown out from a running train. Now, the question is: where are we heading for? The rail journey has become a nightmare now. It has simply turned into a nemesis during the era of Shri Nitish Kumar. The Government did not visualise the gravity of such disastrous episodes in rail journey in our country. Just by resorting to statistical jugglery, they cannot hoodwink the people of India for long, because in absolute terms, still the railway accidents are quite on the higher side in the international perspective.

Sir, today, Indian Railway has become a death parlour and corporate killing is taking place by the deliberate neglect of the Railway Ministry. Even the Minister himself has admitted that 65 per cent of railway accidents are attributed to the inefficiency of railway staff.

Now, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Railway Minister to the financial mismanagement of his Ministry. Virtually, at present, the Railway has landed itself in a financial mismatch. Budgetary support for Railways

has been declining over the years. During the Fifth Five-Year Plan period, 75 per cent of budgetary support was provided to the development of Railways. In the Sixth Plan period, 54 per cent of budgetary support was given to the Railways. During the Seventh Plan period, it was to the tune of 42 per cent. In the Eighth Plan period, it was reduced to 33 per cent and in the Ninth Plan period, it was further reduced to 29 per cent. So, with no alternative, the Railways had to resort to external borrowings. During the Ninth Plan period, it was suggested to mobilise internal resources, to make fresh investments for the development of Railways.

But the Ministry has failed miserably in mobilising the resources. For the Annual Plan 2001-2002, a total outlay of Rs. 12,330 crore has been estimated, comprising an internal generation of resources of Rs. 2,630 crore, that is, 21 per cent; market borrowings of Rs. 3,000 crore, that is 24 per cent; capital from general exchequer of Rs. 4,040 crore, that is 33 per cent; a Special Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 2,210 crore, that is, 18 per cent; and Safety Fund of Rs. 450 crore.

In the same way, in the Annual Plan for 2003-2004, there was a proposal for an outlay of Rs. 12,918 crore, comprising internal generation of resources of Rs. 2,630 crore, that is, 20.36 per cent; market borrowings of Rs. 3,000 crore, that is, 23.22 per cent; and capital from General Exchequer of Rs. 4,544.34 crore, that is, 35.18 per cent.

In this year's Budget also, the Annual Plan for 2004-2005 has been kept tentatively at Rs. 13,425 crore. This includes budgetary support of Rs. 4,544 crore, that is, 33 per cent. The internal resources are only 19 per cent and Special Railway Safety Fund is only 20 per cent. Therefore, it clearly indicates that the Railway finances have been in the doldrums. When the traffic volume has registered a slight growth, it is not commensurate with the earnings of the Railways. May I ask the hon. Minister how much earnings have been unrealised so far?

The most salient feature is that bulk of the freight movement has now been diversified to the road sector.

[Shri Adhir Chowdhary]

The share of the freight movement has been declining in so far as the Railways are concerned. In the year 1950-51, the share of the road sector was only 12 per cent of the total freight movement; it has now reached 60 per cent. In 1950-51, the Railways' share in freight movement was 88 per cent; now it has been reduced to 40 per cent. Even in 2001-2002, the ratio between rail and road in so far as freight movement is concerned, was only 18:82.

Till now, the backlog of track renewal during the Tenth Five Year Plan has been 43,990 kilometres. However, the Government is promising too much, but it has not been implementing its promises. Almost all the Members of this House must agree to the contention made by me. Since long, I have been demanding a railway connection for the Nashipur-Azimganj. The hon. Minister has allotted Rs. 2 crore for that project. But till now, not even a farthing has been spent on that particular project. It is simply discrimination against the district of Murshidabad. The Minister of Railways is totally apathetic to the problems not only in relation to the State of West Bengal in general but also for the district of Murshidabad in particular.

[Translation]

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHAUDHARY (Katihar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you heartily for having provided me an opportunity to speak on the railway budget.

The efforts made by hon. Railway Minister under the leadership of head of this nation and the National Democratic Alliance Government and the most popular leader of the country our Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee are commendable and that is why I rise to express any gratitude and to appreciate the welfare measures taken by him through this interim budget. As far as the safety and protection are concerned hon. Railway Minister has made his best efforts by attaching the Government Railway Policy with the RPF and by this, I feel that safety would be further ensured.

The wonderful works performed under the National Railways Development Scheme are also commendable.

The scheme of plying several additional trains formulated by the hon. Minister also includes DMU and EMU trains. Most of the DMUs and EMUs trains announced in the 2003-04 budget have started plying. I would also like to thank him for plying 35 additional service trains and the Jana Shatabdi Express which were due to be introduced this year. The information system set up for informing the delay by more than 30 minutes in regard to Rajdhani, Janashatabdi or Shatabdi trains is a very vital development. There has been an expansion in the Tatkal Sewa Yojana and achievements have been made much beyond our target in advance in the case of transportation of goods.

We know that railway is lifeline of our country. It plays a vital role in our country's economy. As water, air and food are vital to human life so do railways enjoy an important position in the phase of human development. For this purpose hon. Minister of Railways has presented several proposals which have been discussed by our other fellow speakers. As far as generation of employment opportunity is concerned as many as three lakh people will get employment every year by way of implementation of railway schemes and expansion of train service and increase in taxes. It is a major achievement.

Much development is anticipated with the plying of Sampark Kranti train. I would like to submit that 18 Sampark Kranti trains have been plied, out of which one Sampark Kranti express which is beginning on the eighth February will ply in Bihar from New Delhi to Samastipur. I would like it to be extended upto Katihar. That it should run from Samastipur to Katihar is our expectation from the hon. Minister of Railways. Not discussing the expenditure of the interim railway budget. I would request hon. Minister of Railways to give some importance to Katihar which is the gateway of North eastern railways and from where trains ply in six different directions and besides its boundaries touch Nepal and Bangladesh.

It is a place of international importance. I would urge upon you that where so much development has been made viz. National Highways, aviation industry railways all these sectors are getting a boost, Katihar should also be paid due attention. Earlier there were several stoppages

in Katihar. There has been a demand of stoppages of train at several other places. When hon. Railway Minister visited Katihar even then we had placed our demand before him. . . .(Interruptions)

16.30 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will conclude in two-four minutes. There is a train Hate Bazare which starts from Katihar and goes upto Kolkatta, this train has been extended upto Barauni but our demand is that a couple of trains should be started so that people can be saved from the trouble of unnecessary delays.

Varsoi is an important station at Katihar from the point of view of substantial revenue. We demand that Amritsar-Dibrugarh, 5933 up and 5934 down, Lohit Express, 5631 up-5632 down, Jodhpur-Guwahati Express 5631 up and 5632 down, Dadar Guwahati Express 5647 up and 5648 down should be given a stoppage in Varsoi since it is an important station. It is a densely populated area. There are no roads. If these stoppage would be given, it would help those people immensely.

I would make a very humble request to the hon. Minister of Railways about the Capital Express plying from Danapur to Katihar which has now been extended upto NGP. We seek bonus in lieu of it that its stoppage should be given at Labha and Pranpur road station. No expenditure is to be incurred therein. It would give me great pleasure to anticipate an assurance from you in regard to fulfilling this demand in this (Railway Minister's) speech today.

We seek that certain changes should be made in the medical facilities. There is a need to make radical changes in the railway hospitals in view of the increasing influence of the Indian system of Medicine. Homeopathic doctors have been recruited in the railway hospitals on temporary basis. We demand that Ayurvedic doctors should also be recruited on these lines. Simultaneously, we demand that 110 acres of land which is acquired by the Railways and is on the banks of a river should be utilised for setting up a warehouse for manufacturing concrete sleeper.

I would further like to submit that train 5201-up which was initially started from Katihar but was later on continued from Baruani should again be started from Katihar. I firmly believe that you will definitely fulfil this demand. I would like to thank you for connecting such remote areas with trains viz Jammu to Udhampur train which is considered one of the biggest achievements of the world. The railway tracks have been laid at such a height which can not be seen elsewhere in the world.

I would further request you to kindly fulfil the demand of plying a train from Manihar to Ahmedabad as approved by you during your recent visit to Katihar. My demand is that efforts should be made to extend it upto Bhaluka. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHAUDHARY : I will conclude in one or two minutes. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We have very little time so please conclude now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHAUDHARY : To conclude I would request you that number of general coaches of Amrapali Mahananda Express North East Express should be increased. Again I would like to congratulate hon. Prime Minister alongwith Shri Nitish Kumar ji as the most efficient Railway Minister by far and convey my best wishes to him for his future that he may again hold this office and take the country to its heights and his efforts be rewarded in making India a country of the 21st century. With these worlds I conclude.

MR. SPEAKER : Friends, I can give only five minutes to each Member since at six o'clock we have to go for voting. So please give vent to your views taking just five minutes time each.

SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH (Farukhabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my views. The hon. Minister of Railways has

[Shri Chandra Bhushan Singh]

done some commendable work. He has introduced 'Raksha Kawach Yojna' to avoid accidents. This is a good beginning. Fundamental changes have been brought about in the signal system and further changes are being made. That is also a commendable work. There has been an increase of 3 per cent in passenger traffic. The volume of goods traffic also registered an increase. He deserves appreciation for all that.

The Government propose to construct a railine from Jammu to Udhampur-the highest place in the world to have the railway line. All these steps are commendable. There is no doubt about that. Yet, there are other things, which need to be done. I would like to draw his attention to a recent happening, which occurred only yesterday. Yesterday, I was waiting for Jodhpur-Howrah Express at Etawah station. One passenger got ill at Kanpur. When enquired on telephone, it was told that the doctor would be available in Etawah. I am talking about Jodhpur-Howrah Express. When the train stopped at Etawah, the doctor was not available. After that when the train started moving, there was an incident of chain-pulling. The train was halted for half an hour due to which the Shatabdi Express was late. I would like to suggest that there should be medical facility for those passengers who fall ill during journey. There is a provision in the railways that in case a passenger falls ill, he should get medical facility. But that facility was not available.

I belong to a district which has both broad-gauge and metre gauge lines. But our district is not connected with any major city. Kalindi Express is the only train which crosses through our district originating from Delhi. This train was discontinued at least eleven times during four and a half years of my tenure. The Kalindi Express was discontinued under different pretexts ranging from Kumbh Mela, fogging, floods and fear of the bridge being washed away. People come to Delhi from Farukhabad. But there is only one train on that route. The Railway Department is least concerned about that train. Nobody is bothered about giving importance to this train. Even now this train service remains discontinued that train should be

immediately restarted keeping in view the interest of the traders.

The gauge conversion work is in progress between Kanpur and Hathras. Firstly, he took up the issue of gauge-conversion between Kanpur and Farukhabad. The work on all the culverts is complete, sleepers have been laid down, rail-lines have been constructed and all other works are complete, yet whenever the divisional Manager comes here, he says that the work will be completed in next December. We do not know when that December will come. I would like to say that the gauge-conversion work may be completed soon so that district Farukhabad may also be linked with big cities like Kanpur and Lucknow. This is my suggestion. Insurance charge is included in every air-ticket. Can the same system not be applied in case of rail-tickets? This is because we know that it is not possible to completely rule out the possibility of train-accidents.

Population-wise India is so vast a country that the cases of accidents cannot be checked completely. There should be a provision of insurance with every ticket so that if any passenger dies during rail journey his family may get some compensation.

Sir, I want to express one more view. I had an opportunity of visiting your area, Buxar. When I was standing on the platform of Buxar, I was unable to walk over there because there was human excreta everywhere. Can the maintenance and sanitation work of platforms and lavatories over there not be given to private agency on the pattern it has been given to SGPI in Lucknow. I claim that the maintenance work done by SGPI and the services of its nurses are unparalleled. People will have a sigh of relief if the sanitation work is given to a private agency.

I would also like to mention that the work on broadgauge line between Shikohabad and Farukhabad is going on for the last 60 years. The modernization work of that line has been undertaken, but speed is very slow so much so that the modernization work of only 43 Kms. has been going on during the last three years. I fail to understand how many more years will be taken for

completion of this work. Sir, sleepers have already been laid down there if modernization work gets a little more thrust, people will get a great relief.

New Schemes have been launched for which I would like to thank the Government. However, I would like to mention that the population of China and India is almost the same. The total length of rail-lines laid there per annum is one thousand kilometre. Will that be done here also and will more and more rail-tracks be constructed here in our country?

[English]

SHRI TRILOCHAN KANUNGO (Jagatsinghpur) : I thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving this opportunity. I stand to support the Interim Railway Budget presented by the hon. Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar, While doing so, through you, I have two or three matters to be brought before him, not for consideration but for action which has been neglected so far.

My points are regional in nature, but it is for the prosperity of the Indian Railways. These issues have been neglected. Orissa has the lowest rail track area. It is having only 13 kilometres per 1000 square kilometres of area. It is the lowest among the major States. I am telling you, Sir, that for the last 40 years, there has been a demand for a railway line between Talcher and Bimlagarh. It had been surveyed three times. The latest survey was done in 2000-01. When it was done, it was found that the rate of return was quite high. It is 10.4 per cent. It is not only economically viable, but it is also socially a desirable project. It passes through 100 per cent tribal area. It passes through the mineral rich area. It passes through the forest area and it will lessen the distance of Rourkela to various growth centres of Orissa and the country. Talcher-Bimlagarh rail line has been neglected after the latest survey of 2000-01. We had expected that with the advent of the Tenth Plan, it would definitely be taken up, but it has not yet been taken up under several pretexts.

Sir, I will tell you that the lines, which have been abandoned by the Railways/Railway Ministry, have been taken up. They have minus rates of return. I do not want

to tell you the names. Of course, it is not done during Shri Nitish Kumar's time, but it has been done.

The railway lines which are going to give you the best returns have not been taken up. One such line is the Talcher-Bimlagarh line. I feel, in his reply to this discussion on the Interim Budget the hon. Minister of Railways who is today in a very cheerful mood – would definitely announce taking up of this line quickly. I am told, it has been cleared by the Planning Commission and has also been approved by the Cabinet. So, I request that he should announce this today. Nobody knows who would come back to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha. When we go back to our State, we can at least say that we have got this Talcher-Bimlagarh line included for Orissa. It is insulting to have the provision of only one thousand rupees in supplementary demand.

It is very much depressing that there are two narrow gauge lines whose gauge conversion has not been done. The first is the Naupada-Gunpur line and the other is the Rupsa-Bangriposi line. They were constructed during the time of the then Maharajas. Thousands of kilometres of gauge conversion has been effected during the last three Plan periods but these two lines have not been taken up. The first line is of 89 kilometres and runs through the States of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. The second line is hundred per cent in Orissa and is of 90 kilometres. If this line is completed, the distance would be lessened to Tata if it could connect Gorumahisani. It would lessen the distance to the tribal areas and it would be socially beneficial to the tribal people. For the Naupada-Gunpur line, the latest estimated cost is Rs. 91 crore but only Rs. 5 crore have been provided. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister in how many years it would be completed. Similarly, for the Rupsa-Bangriposi line also, the estimated cost is Rs. 78 crore and no land acquisition is necessary. It could be completed within two to three years provided money is earmarked for its construction. It would give very good returns but it has not been taken up.

I have brought to the notice of the hon. Minister, through you, two important matters and I hope in his reply he would assure us that work on these lines would be taken up in 2004-2005 in right earnest. This is my request.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Before calling the next name I would like to tell all the Members that Members are allowed to lay their written speeches on the table of the House. The Members desirous of laying their written speeches on the table of the House, can do so. I want that Minister's reply be started ten minutes past five and it is my duty to give adequate time to him.

*DR. MAHENDRA SINGH PAL (Nainital) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, there is a need to set up Uttarakhand railway zone comprising Northern and Eastern railway zones in Ramnagar, district Nainital in Uttaranchal State so as to boost railways in this State. As such Uttarakhand zone be set up in Uttaranchal.

Construction of a new rail line between Hardwar-Kotdwar via Jaspur-Ramnagar be started at an early date and rail line between Kichha-Sitarganj via Nankamta-Tanakpur should also be constructed. A new rail line should be constructed between district Champawat-Tanakpur and district Wageshwar. Survey of this rail line was conducted during the British regime. As such there is an urgent need to conduct survey for construction of the above rail line de-novo.

There is an urgent need to introduce a new train between Mumbai and Kathgodam, district Nainital via Bareilly. The newly announced Sampark Kranti Train be started between New Delhi and Kathgodam and this train be introduced from New Delhi railway station at an early date so that people could get rail facility from New Delhi railway station.

Let a new train be introduced between Ramnagar and Delhi at an early date so that the Indians as well as the tourists visiting from the world over could avail the benefit of the Corbett Park Located in Ramnagar region. The Chief Minister, Uttaranchal has already written a letter to the Ministry to this effect.

[English]

DR. M.V.V.S. MURTHI (Visakhapatnam) : Sir, I will confine my speech only to important points.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

I am very glad that the hon. Minister of Railways has improved the efficiency of the Railways as well as the revenues substantially. But I would like to bring to his kind attention certain important things.

I have been requesting him for a long time that the Vizag-Chennai bound train is to be made a daily train, but I was not able to impress upon the hon. Minister of Railways about it. I do not know why. It is my misfortune. Even in spite of the heavy traffic, the train was introduced as a weekly train. So, I have been requesting him for the past one and a half years to two years to make it, at least, four-day-a-week train.

Now, the hon. Minister will remain there but we will not be there after two or three days. May I request the hon. Minister for Railways to make the Chennai-Vizag train a four-days-a-week train, at least, which I have been requesting him for a long time? A very huge traffic is there on the overnight train No. 6006. I would like to point out that a very sizeable number of Keralites are there in Visakhapatnam. They are very small traders. There used to be one bogey attached to that Mangalore-bound train, that is, Patna-Cochin Express (No. 6310 and Howrah-Trivandrum Express No. 6234). One bogey used to be attached at Vishakhapatnam and detached at Mangalore. But later it was discontinued. These people are very small traders. They are going annually to their families and coming back. So, may I request the hon. Minister to restore this facility of attaching that bogey also to those trains?

I would like to say another thing about the Visakhapatnam railway station. The modernisation scheme of this railway station is pending for the past two years. A very little amount is being spent there. The population has increased to about two million but the facilities remain as at the level of only five lakh – half a million. A lot of congestion is there. May I expect the modernisation of the railway station to be expedited, which the hon. Minister had taken on record in the last Budget itself?

There are several things to bring to his kind attention. I want to bring only one more point to his kind attention. The hon. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh also has written

to him to extend the railway line to the foothill of Srisailem hills. It is a very big pilgrim centre. The population of not only the State of Andhra Pradesh but also the nearby States will be benefited by extending the railway line to the foothill of Srisailem pilgrim centre.

Similarly, Bhadrachalam line is also pending for a long time. I request for early completion of that line also. There are so many things, but, at least, if these things are done, then we will be happy.

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

*I would like to bring to your kind attention a persistent problem that is being faced in Visakhapatnam city, my constituency. There are a number of Keralites and South Indians staying in Visakhapatnam metropolitan city. For reaching their home towns, there are no direct trains. In the past, there used to be some bhogies attached to Patna-Cochin Express (Train No. 6310) and Howrah-Trivandrum Express (Train No. 6324) and were withdrawn later.

May I request you, Sir, to consider favourably introduction to attachment of one bhogie each of Patna-Cochin Express and Howrah-Trivandrum Express, vice-versa from Visakhapatnam to cater to their needs, since oldage people and children are travelling and are unable to change the trains on their own. Most of the Keralites and South Indian public staying here are small-time traders and hoteliers. By doing so, you will be doing a great favour to these travelling public. I request that the following points also be considered :

The Gauge conversation from Nizamabad to Secunderabad should be expedited. For this additional funds to the tune of Rs. 50 crores should be allocated.

Request to transfer railway land to the State Government to rehabilitate encroachers on alternative land offered by railways Vishakhapatnam.

Requests for funds for rail connectivity to minor ports of Gangavaram, Krishnapatnam and Vodarevu from nearest broadage line.

Construction of new railway line and development of Krishnapatnam in the east coast for export of iron ore and import of coal.

Introduction of one more daily shuttle train from Vizag to Borra caves for development of tourism.

Request to consider setting of a centre for information technology for railways at International Institute of Technology, Hyderabad.

Request for restoring three lines at Royapuram for Barytes Exports. The A.P. Mineral Development Corporation is supplying Baryte Lumps from Managamept mines to export house for export through Chennai port. Previously three railways lines available at Royapuram were being earmarked for unloading of Baryte lumps. However, recently the Southern Railways has permitted manual inloading of iron ore rakes loaded from Hospet area and earmarked "Lines for unloading iron ore restricting handling of Barytes to one line. The Union Minister was requested to issue to instruction to restore the previous arrangement of making arrangement of making available all the three lines at Royapuram siding for unloading of Barytes.

This request may kindly be acceded to.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (Calcutta North West): Sir, I draw your attention also regarding one letter which Sourav Ganguly, the Captain of the Indian Cricket Team, has written. I am carrying a letter of him addressed to Shri Nitish Kumar, for which I seek your support also. He has written to the hon. Minister of Railways with the hope that he would be able to draw his precious attention to the subject narrated in the following paragraphs. I do not want to read the whole letter but I will read a few portion of this letter which he has written to the hon. Minister of Railways.

"You will indeed appreciate that we need infrastructural facilities for cricket where the trainees will not only be imparted coaching but also be given proper exposure of playing matches with reputed teams in our effort to develop their all round technical skills in cricket and

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay]

also for building proper match temperament. I have already discussed the matter with quite a number of internationally reputed cricketers of yesteryears from different countries including our own who have kindly consented to be a part of our scheme.

Our dream project can be a reality if you kindly allow the company to utilise the Cricket Complex, which has been developed recently by Eastern Railway at Behala, in southern part of Kolkata. It is assured that the interest of Eastern Railway will be totally protected in every manner and the company will utilise the complex during the period only when the same remains free. I understand the erstwhile General Manager of Eastern Railway, Sri S.C. Sengupta, had made a reference to Railway Board for obtaining the Board's "Administrative Approval".

In the circumstances, I would earnestly request you to kindly look into the matter and arrange to expedite the Board's approval at your earliest convenience.

I shall eagerly await your kind response in the matter."

Sir, Shri Sourav Ganguly is asking for a part of the Railway land which has been formed as a cricket complex under the Eastern Railway with a purpose that it can be set up as a cricket academy. I hope the hon. Minister of Railways, who has his imagination and farsightedness, will certainly respond to the appeal. I am making an appeal on behalf of the captain of the whole Indian team that the hon. Minister may kindly accede to the demand.

MR. SPEAKER : Is he asking for a specific time or is he asking for a portion of the particular complex?

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, one complex has been set up by the Eastern Railway for their own purpose. What Shri Sourav Ganguly is asking is to hand over the complex to the committee headed by Shri Sourav Ganguly for finalising the whole issue by signing agreement with Railways. He has very categorically said that 'I am not going to disturb the Railway zone's order'.

I hope and believe that Shri Nitish Kumar, who has imagination and farsightedness and who loves sports also, will consider it. It is a new type of approach and, I think, a new dimension. In Australia also the Indian cricket team has performed very well. It can be a gift on behalf of the Railway Ministry.

MR. SPEAKER : He is not asking for a gift. He wants it only to be used. I am sure, the Railways will consider it.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : He is in a mood to open a cricket academy over there. I hope the hon. Minister will respond to it.

Secondly, many railway projects were announced on the floor of the House for West Bengal which include Digha-Tumluk, Balurghat-Eklaki and extension of metro up to Garia. I believe that these projects will be completed by the hon. Minister Shri Nitish Kumar as quickly as possible. The circular railway is really gaining momentum. More or less, the announced proposals are going to be completed very soon for which I want to convey my thanks and gratitude to the hon. Minister. On the other proposals of Digha-Tumluk, Balurghat-Eklaki and extension of metro up to Garia, these may kindly be taken up for sanction and early completion.

I will not take much time of the House and appreciate the work done by the Railways.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now Shri Prabhunath Singh was making the speech. He was appreciating the Minister of Railways and conveying thanks to him.

Sir, Once upon a time a king used to ask his subjects as to how they were leading their lives.

MR. SPEAKER : You are discussing the Railway Budget.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Sir, a barber was gifted a cow. He had a small family and he would enjoy his meal with the milk of the cow. The king once

asked that wise barber – “You generally frequent all the places. You please tell me how the people are leading their lives. The barber replied – “The people are happy”. After that the king took back the cow which he had gifted to him. Again the king asked him as to how his subjects were living. On this the barber replied – “O’King the people are in great trouble and they are dying of hunger” The same is the situation with the hon. Members. Those who have got their works done, are praising the Minister. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar) : Please tell out whether your work has been done?

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : We have got our work done, we will appreciate it. But what is the position of the general public; that I would like to tell in this House. Sir, Vaishali is the action place (Karmabhoomi) of Lord Buddha and also birth place of Lord Mahavira. That’s the place where Lichhvi Republic, the first democracy came into being. The demand of completing the Buddha circuit has been fulfilled. I have been raising this demand constantly. I would like to thank hon. Minister of Railways that he has fulfilled this demand and the Prime Minister is going to lay the foundation stone in Vaishali for which I thank him.

17.00 hrs.

History has been created. History was created 2600 years ago when Lord Buddha spread the message of peace. This was being demanded since 1904 and Railway line has been sanctioned to connect the said place. That demand has now been fulfilled in 2004 after a gap of hundred years.

Now I would like to dwell upon the plight of common man. We travel by A/C first class in trains where quality meal is served, but a common man who travels in General coach of the same train can not get even place to sit. I was trying to find out in the Budget as to what provision has been done to provide facilities to the person who buy tickets by standing in queue for hours? The persons who have mobile phones can get their rail tickets booked through cellular phones but what has been done in the

Budget for the convenience of a poor fellow who buys tickets by standing in queue. The hon. Minister of Railways should tell us about the sale of rail tickets in Bihar. It is not fair to time and again talk about computerised reservation. What been done for the daily commuters who work in factories and fields to earn livelihood. Have you tried to understand their difficulties? We travel in A/C coaches and Rajdhani Express trains. Have you ever seen the condition of other trains running side by side of these luxurious superfast trains? As prisoners in jails are discriminated upon similarly poor who buy their tickets by standing in queue are treated differently. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN KUMAR (Jahanabad) : Just travel by ‘Jan Sewa’ (ordinary train) someday to have first hand experience of difficulties.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : How does the common man travel by purchasing unreserved tickets? I would like to elaborate the condition in second class of trains. I am trying to find out whether something has been done for the common man. Much hype about reservations through mobiles and computers has been created yet the poor who have to stand in queue to purchase tickets do not get it and are coerced to buy ticket in black. No provision has been made in the budget to provide facility to such people. Sampooma Kranti and Sapta Kranti trains are overcrowded. These trains have proved very useful. The hon. Minister of Railways has made an announcement in regard to connecting different parts of the country through Sampark Kranti Express trains and I am sure these trains will prove to be as successful as have been the Sampooma Kranti and Sapta Kranti Express trains. A number of people have been benefited through these trains. Therefore, I hope that Sampark Kranti Express trains will also benefit the people at large.

Railway lines are in a state of dilapidation. Bridges are quite old and outdated. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Railways towards the safety of the railway passengers. Railway stations are quite filthy. I would like to know what arrangements have been made to ensure cleanliness at railway stations because platforms are so dirty that people are unable to even walk properly

[Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh]

and prefer to board the train and leave as early as possible.

Konkan Railways has designed and built a sky bus. As a Member of Committee I want to see that Bus. However, the Department of Urban Development is not giving its nod for the sky bus. Such invention has no parallel anywhere else in the world, but our scientists and technocrats have invented the sky bus. This will be beneficial for the densely populated cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. This bus will ply on high rise pillars and involves less expenditure. It will cost one third of the expenditure incurred on metro railways. On Metro Railway, there crore rupees are to be spent whereas this task can be completed in one crore rupees. I would like to know the fate of the sky bus designed by the Konkan Railway Corporation and which authority is creating hurdle in implementation of that proposal.

MR. SPEAKER : Your time is over. Please sit down.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say something about my constituency. Sir, there is a long pending demand to provide stoppage of the Intercity Express of Kaanti. Though Sapta Kranti Express and Sampooma Kranti Express start from Muzaffarpur yet these don't stop at Kaanti Nariyar and Motipur stations. Stoppage should be provided to these trains at above mentioned stations. These trains should be provided a halt there. The hon. Minister has provided halt of 'Jan Sewa' Express, but still Bandra Express should be provided a halt at Motipur. It is said that discrimination is being done in providing stoppage of the trains. There is a lot of distance between Mohamadpur and Mahua. These are connected by highways and PWD roads. That is why a halt station is being demanded. The hon. Minister has stated that overbridges have been sanctioned at Dighi, Aangola, Gumti and Motijhiri. Both highways and Railways are under the control of the Government of India. Then, why this work is not being undertaken? I request to kindly start this work. . . .(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Nawal Kishore Rai ji, please start your speech. Now onwards, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad ji's speech will not form the part of the proceedings of the House. Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad ji, I am listening to your thanks giving speech after a fairly long time.

[English]

*SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission I would like to submit my few suggestions on Railway-Vote on Account Budget presented in House by Hon'ble Railway Minister on 30.01.2004 as under :

Adequate Rail Rakes be provided for sat transportation from Gandhidham and other Railway stations in Kutch-Rajkot-Surendranagar and Patan districts of Gujarat which are main salt producing areas.

Frequency of Ala Hazrat Express be increased from four days in a week to daily. Kutch which is a border district be connected with Hyderabad and Chennai by direct passenger Rail links.

New Railway line be provided to connect Dholavira 5000 year old Harrappan site which attract foreign as well as foreign tourists from Bhimasar via Rader or from Chitrod via Rader.

*SHRI KHAGEN DAS (Tripura West) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Minister that I come from a region which is one of the most backward in communications even after 56 years of Independence. The region is neglected. So, I urge the Government to pay adequate attention to the demands of the people of the North-East region.

Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Minister to the extension of Railway lines from Agartala to Snbroom. It may be pointed out that the survey of Agartala-Subroom Extension of Railway line via Belonia was completed in May, 2000.

It may be mentioned that this project is not only one of the long standing demands of the people of Tripura but

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

it would also connect one of the remotest regions of the country by rail services for both passengers and goods.

There is also a possibility of trade through Chittagons port in Bangladesh which is only 75 kms. from Snbroom.

This could also lead to transformation of the North Eastern Region.

So, I strongly demand that adequate provision in the Budget for the project should be kept.

The Railway Minister is also aware that there are serious shortages of railway rakes for transportation of essential commodities in Tripura. All the essential commodities including construction materials are to be brought from outside the State.

So, I demand that adequate rakes should be provided.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI (Sitamarhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for allowing me to speak on the interim rail budget. This interim budget is development oriented and I welcome it with an open heart.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Raghuvansh Babu told a story about the cow and directing towards Shri Prabhunath Singhji, when he said that the cow had been taken, he altered his stand. In his constituency a small scheme was taken up through this interim budget, in the last quarterly supplementary rail budget, work in Raghuvansh Babu's Vaishali was undertaken. It was an arrangement between the two men, but in my constituency neither last time nor this time any work has been undertaken. I am not a sycophant but still I want to say that Shri Nitish Kumarji has so far proved to be the best Minister of Railways in the independent India. So in disagreement with the story of the 'hajjam thakur' (the barber), I would say that the work of both of them has been accomplished. I have heard Raghuvansh Babu uttering 'thanks' for the first time, so I want to thank him.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : But the demand for this scheme has been there since 1904.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : As Raghuvansh Babu has thanked, I am thankful for that, but I do not agree on the kings, story. He said that this budget is not for the common man, but the Minister of Railways has introduced Jansewa Express which has no reserved seats and it leaves Patna to reach Delhi directly in 12 hours. There are no employment opportunities in Bihar and our people go to Punjab, Haryana for work. They come from Patna to Delhi in 12 hours. They are all praise for Shri Nitish Kumar. Raghuvansh Babu is not getting this on the budget papers. I do not know this but if we look at all this from the very basic level, the Minister of Railways has done a lot for the common people be it Sapt Kranti Express, Sampooma Kranti Express or the Jan Sewa Express. All these trains are meant for these rural people. There is no district left in Bihar where the facility of computerised rail reservation is not available. In my constituency it is at two places, so I would like to thank the Minister of Railways for all this.

Through you, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Railways towards my constituency. In my constituency, the laying of the new rail line on the Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi Section is targeted to be completed by 30 September, 2004. After sanctioning, this project has been bifurcated. This was a rail line to be laid on the Ram Janki and Ramayan Circuit which was to link Jankipur via Sitamarhi, Sonebarsa, Bhitamor and Jainagar.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabodh Pandaji, now you speak.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : But in 1996-97 with this thing in mind, this rail line as a part of Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Bhitamor, Jainagar, Sonebarsa line was kept in waiting after giving money for its survey and Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi line was given a go by, the Minister of Railways is getting it done. I demand that it should be approved in view of its importance for defence and tourism. The MPs from Bihar had made a core committee to press for this demand to approve this from the view point of tourism. Now by giving a fresh approval to this after modification in material, this rail line may be extended to Sitamarhi, Sonebarsa, Bihtamor and Jainagar so that the Ramayana circuit could be completed.

MR. SPEAKER : Pandaji, if your speech is written, you may lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Funds have been released for survey of the Muzaffarpur-Gomti, Narayanpur-Aurai and Jankipur Road-Madhubani, but it is still pending. This new rail line should be sanctioned and laid soon.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Simranjit Mannji, would you please lay your speech on the Table of the House.

SARDAR SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN (Sangrur) : O.K. Sir.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabodh Panda and Shri Simranjit Singh Mann are permitted to lay their speeches on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Computerised rail reservation centres have been installed at three places in my constituency. I want that computerised booking for unreserved seats should also be started so that the common passengers could get unreserved tickets easily. With these words I thank you for allowing me to speak.

MR. SPEAKER : Now I would like to remaining Members to give their suggestion in one minute each. I cannot give more time to anybody, because I am going to call the hon. Minister at quarter past five O'Clock. You have to give your suggestion in one minute, you do not have to make speeches.

[English]

*SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore) : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on interim Budget on Railways.

Sir, the Indian Railways are the second largest network of the world, run 14000 passengers and freight trains per day on 63,140 Kms. (around) route. Indian

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

Railways observed advancement in technology and has become self-sufficient in indigenous manufacture of rolling stock and other vital tools and equipments.

Railways are the only system which provide reliable and cheap transport to the poor section of the society at affordable fare and mark as public utility service.

The main elements of social service obligation identified in the area of (1) essential commodities carried below cost; (2) passenger and other coaching services; (3) operation of uneconomic branch lines; (4) new lines opened for traffic. Apart from Railway's social service obligation, certain essential commodities of mass consumption like salt, sugarcane, potatoes, fruits and vegetables are carried below the cost of operation in order to contain their market price.

But sufficient rakes have not been provided for that. In West Bengal, more rakes to be provided for carrying potatoes from Tarakeswar and Midnapore Railway Station. The people have applied to the Minister to allot two rakes monthly for salt from Milavittm Railway Station.

Sir, Indian Railways are facing a threat of privatisation of its production units which produce locomotives, coaches and rolling stocks items required for the maintenance of infrastructure.

The Hon'ble Minister has announced several trains in the Budget. But what happened to the announcement made in the last Budget. Out of 48, how many have not yet been introduced?

In case of employment, the Railways has failed to impress upon the people, rather generated serious confusion. The recruitment policy should be changed. Minister is aware of the situation in regard to the RRB Exams. in Assam, Maharashtra and Bihar. The Indian Railways are the symbol of national integrity. But the RRB Exams has given a blow to them.

In case of doubling, the progress is not up to the mark. I request the Minister to consider the demand of doubling from Kharagpur to Midnapore.

In case of recruitment, the case of Act apprentice and Homeopathy and Ayurvedic doctors should be considered. Railways should regularise them.

Railway should consider the schemes for public utility. In Khargpur, a proposal for construction of Bus stand is there, State municipality is ready to take over the land for that. Railway should hand over the said land free of cost.

Railway should consider the proposal for the rehabilitation of slum people who are living in the Railways and particularly in Khargpur. This is a burning question. I appeal to the Minister to address this problem.

*SARDAR SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN (Sangrur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for allowing me to speak on the Interim Railway Budget by the Hon'ble Mr. Nitish Kumar. During his tenure as Minister for Railways, Mr. Nitish Kumar has shown immense dynamism and initiative. However, the policies of NDA Government towards the Punjab have not created a feel good feeling and though the Punjab has created handsome revenues for the Railway Ministry investment in Punjab by this Ministry has been negligible. May I point out some of the difficulties we face in the Punjab regarding the Railways. We would like a rail line running along the Indo-Pak border from Ferozpora to Amritsar. This will be good for the defence of the country as we will provide the Sikhs of Malwa a direct link to their holy city of Amritsar. Further, we want the Chandigarh-Ludhiana rail line to be completed expeditiously. We would also appreciate if a double track is laid from Rajpura via Bhatinda to Ferozpora. The Sikhs from the South and mainly Tamil Nadu and Andaman and Nicobar want a direct train link to Amritsar from Chennai. To give our agriculture a boost, we need refrigerated wagons to carry out seed potatoes, the best in the world to be exported to SAARC countries - Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. At present, these countries import their seed potato from Holland at four times the prices that we can export to them. We need extra wagons to clear the glut in grains, wheat and paddy to areas of scarcity in the country. Since we have a lot of

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

NRIs visitors and foreigners visiting the Punjab, we would appreciate if the job of keeping the Railway track and Railway stations spotlessly clean is given to private contractors. At present, these countries emit smells and human excreta is to be seen lying at all places. This gives the Punjab and India a very bad publicity. We would appreciate if Dhauldhar Express goes to its destination, Pathankot via Amritsar as it would give the Sikhs of this area direct access to the holy city of Amritsar. We also want the Sachkhand Express to stop at Sirhind junction as we have many pilgrims who wish to visit Nanded (Hazoor Sahib) in Maharashtra from this area. We would also want old railway stations and bridges over one hundred years to be declared heritage sites. My constituents want that the Dhauladhar Express should halt at Malerkotla and Ahmedgarh stations as these are important centres of industry, trade and commerce in my constituency. We are very dismayed that recruitment to the Railways and RPF has been practically nil from the Punjab. We would like our share of the cake too. Crime on the railways in Punjab is on the increase, especially the abominable crime of rape. This must be curbed with a strong hand.

I feel very sorry for the neglect that Punjab has suffered from at the hands of the NDA Government. In 1947, there was an agreement between the Sikhs and Hindu leadership that a Sikh would be given one of the four portfolios viz. - Defence, Finance, Home or External Affairs and there would be two Sikh Members in the Union Cabinet. The NDA Government has not honoured the pledge and the NDA Constituent in the Punjab, Mr. Badal, has not pressed for this historic agreement. Further we have no representation in the Union Cabinet Committee on Security, the National Security Council, the Supreme Court of India and the Nuclear Command and Control System. We hope the NDA Government would deal with us with fairness. In today's interim Budget presented by Mr. Jaswant Singh, I find nothing and no investment in the Punjab. Our border districts have been neglected. There is no investment of our airport at Rajasansi. Tax concessions have not been given to the Punjab as have been given to Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. As a result our industry is fleeing to these

[Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann]

States, thus leading to our impoverishment and unemployment figures stand at 30 lakhs. This is a startling and a worrying figure.

I do hope that NDA Government will set the record right and not leave the Punjab to total neglect.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur) : This is a good Interim Rail Budget. I support it. I thank the Minister of Railways as he has done a lot of work in my area. But, I would like to draw his attention towards some points such as the work of gauge conversion between Nimach and Ratlam is going on at the fast pace. The culverts have been constructed, the sides have been broadened, sleepers have been dropped along the track, rails are also there. If an amount of Rs. 60 crore is sanctioned for this purpose, this work will be completed soon.

MR. SPEAKER : Rampalji, please you speak now.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA : My second request is that in view of Singhasth Mahaparv, Pashupatinath Express should be introduced between Chittaur and Ujjain for the convenience of the passengers.

I am laying the rest of the points on the table of the House which are as follows—

*Mandsaur, Nimach and Aura platforms should be extended soon for the convenience of the passengers. General class coaches should be increased in all trains for the convenience of the passengers. The stoppage of Intercity Express at Maroth and Jammu-Tawi Superfast Express at Shamgarh should be provided.

Full rake loading facility should be provided at Ratlam station.

Steps should be taken to upgrade Nimach and Mandsaur railway stations as model stations for the facility of passengers.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

In view of the excess work at Nimach and Mandsaur computer reservation centers, staff strength should be increased there.

Medical facilities to the railway employees should be enhanced. With a view to avert accidents, full time employees should be posted at level crossing and steps should be taken to ensure that due to broad-gauge work at Mandsaur and Nimach, the passages from platform to the colonies are not blocked otherwise there will be lot of inconvenience to the local people. Since I have already spoken on other points at the time of the railway budget for 2003-2004, I will not repeat all these points.

MR. SPEAKER : Rampalji, you are sitting so close to the Minister, you can speak quite easily. You just tell him about your demands, you need not to speak through me.

SHRI RAMPAL SINGH (Domariaganj) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that a survey was conducted from Doharighat to Sahjanava a stretch of only 190 Kms. in Sidharth Nagar district in my Parliamentary Constituency. This was not sanctioned because it is not a viable line. But a survey has again been conducted from Sahjanava to Sidharth Nagar. Industries are not coming up in this area so people are not getting employment. Therefore, I urge upon the Minister to lay any one of the Doharighat to Balrampur or the Nogarh to Sahjanava lines very soon. With these words, I thank the Minister of Railways.

[English]

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM (Badagara) : I am extremely grateful to you for having given me this opportunity to speak on this Budget. The impact of this will be known only after the new Lok Sabha is constituted and the new Government comes into form.

I will just confine myself to the requirements of my constituency. For the last two-and-a-half years, I have been communicating with the hon. Railway Minister and also the railway authorities about two projects where the fund is being provided from the MPLADS. One is the Foot Overbridge at the railway gate at Tellicherry, and the

second is the underbridge at Palliat Mukkali in Badagara Constituency. However, the railway authorities have not responded positively in this regard.

Since this is the last chance, I am earnestly pleading the hon. Minister to grant these two projects where I have provided Rs. 60 lakh from the MPLADS.

I have just one more request to make about the Inter-City Express, which is going up to Kannur. I had already requested for a stop at Tellicherry. I would like to again repeat this request that this stop should be allowed. In addition, the Yashwantpur-Kannur Express should also be stopped at Tellicherry.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANKAR PRASAD JAISWAL (Varanasi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to express my views on the Interim Budget. The hon. Rail Minister has shown the favour for Varanasi. I appreciate the hon. Minister of Railways for introducing Varanasi-Delhi, Varanasi-Mumbai-Kurla, Varanasi-Ranchi, Varanasi-Howrah and Varanasi-Lucknow trains for the benefits of the people of Varanasi. Ever since 1952 I have seen several Rail Ministers and in my opinion the development works done by Shri Nitish Kumar in railways is unparalleled and the previous Ministers of Railway stand nowhere. I appreciate the hon. Rail Minister for all these achievements.

Sir, through you I would like to say that Varanasi is the cultural, religious and spiritual city of India. This is also the seat of education. Moreover, it is also a commercial city and so we must thank the hon. Minister for introducing so many trains. I would request that he should introduce one more train from Varanasi to Bangalore which will benefit the common men and the traders a lot.

Sir, Varanasi is known as Kashi, but there has been no development of the Kashi railway station. A delegation had also met him in this regard. His approach was very positive and the matter was referred to the head of the concerned department on which action is being taken. I would request that speedy action should be taken on that.

Further development of the Kashi station should be ensured. All the trains crossing through Kashi should be given a stoppage there for the benefit of the local people.

I would like to add one more thing that there are five working days in all the rail locomotives except the Varanasi Diesel Locomotive where they have the provision of 6 working days in a week. I would like to know the reason of this disparity and would also like to request the hon. Minister to ensure the similar provision of six days week in Varanasi diesel locomotive.

With these words, I conclude and thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my views and I lay my further written speech on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : Both things cannot go together. You can either give your speech orally or lay the written speech on the Table of the House.

*SHRI SHANKAR PRASAD JAISWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak in favour of the Rail Budget. The Rail Budget presented by Shri Nitish Kumar is commendable. This Rail Budget is unprecedented. This Budget gives relief to every section of the society and has been prepared keeping in view the interest of every state. Despite hike in the prices of diesel and petrol, the fares and freights have not been increased and there is a relief for the middle class and the poor people who perform rail journey and moreover care has been taken to serve the interest of the poorest of the poor. The freight has not been increased which will help to enhance the volume of goods traffic. The common men prefer train to perform journey. Subsequently, the rail-revenue will increase and departmental requirement will be fulfilled.

For the first time in the Rail Budget 18 trains have been introduced to directly connect State Capitals. In this regard there has been no discrimination against any State and every State has been taken care of. This will benefit those who come here from State Capitals. The features of these trains is that they will take less time in reaching the destination. The important thing is that now people have

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Shankar Prasad Jaiswal]

paucity of time. I am thankful to the hon. Rail Minister for this and I also thank him for enhancing the facility of railway reservation. Now the passengers can feel more convenient to book reservation tickets.

Having done all these things, something is still left to be done for the cultural and religious city of Varanasi which also happens to be the most important city of Poorvanchal. I would like to request him that the importance of Varanasi should not be forgotten while preparing the Budget because this important city is bordering Bihar and the people of Bihar who come here to perform rituals have high regard for this city.

The traders and passengers have to face a lot of difficulties for want of a direct train from Varanasi to Bangalore. The only station in Varanasi has been named after Kashi. The Kashi station is still neglected. There is no computerised reservation facility there. A good number of trains cross through this station but all of them have not been given stoppage. The traders and passengers have to go to the cantonment station for booking of their goods. However, this city is nearer to the major mandis of the city and consequently, it is a more convenient station for traders and the common men. Extension, development and increasing the passenger-amenities of this station is absolutely necessary. The hon. Minister of Railways might be remembering that a delegation of traders and inhabitants of Kashi headed by me had met him. He had also given assurance but nothing concrete has so far been done, which is causing concern among the people of Kashi.

I hope the hon. Minister will pay attention to this problem. With these words, I conclude and lend my support to the Rail Budget.

[English]

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Mavelikara) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, all the Members of Parliament coming from Kerala have signed a memorandum and handed it over to the Hon. Minister of Railways during the last Session

of this Parliament. We listed 21 important issues pertaining to our State. Cutting across party politics, we come together and submitted that memorandum. We are very glad that the hon. Minister has taken enough steps regarding the development of the State of Kerala.

However, the problem Kerala is facing now is that while we have two Divisions – Trivandrum and Palakkad – we do not have any Railway Zone for ourselves. So, we are facing bottlenecks in implementing of programmes. I, therefore, request the hon. Minister to grant a Railway Zone for Kerala.

MR. SPEAKER : Now only suggestions are to be given in one minute. Please understand my position.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Sir, a separate Railway Zone is very much needed for proper development of the State and proper implementation of programmes.

Sufficient funds may be allotted to complete the doubling of Kayamkulam and Ernakulam railway line via Kottayam and Alleppey. The whole problem is that there should a time bound programme for completing this doubling programme. The hon. Minister has laid the foundation stone in my constituency two months before, but the land acquisition process is not picking up. We are taking up the issue with the State Government. At the same time, the Department of Railways also should pursue this with the State Government officials so that enough land may be earmarked and the project can be implemented properly.

Electrification work on Ernakulam-Trivandrum line is moving very slowly. It has to be accelerated so that this work can be completed as early as possible.

More funds should be allotted for completing the work of Kochuveli Second Coaching Terminal within the stipulated time. This would be very helpful for the State of Kerala.

MR. SPEAKER : Members may only give suggestions. Otherwise, I may not be in a position to do justice to many Members. Only suggestions will be allowed.

*SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (Kolar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak in Kannada as per the wishes of the people of my constituency, Kolar, I thank the hon. Ministers Shri Nitishji and Shri Basavanagowdaji for introducing new train between Bangalore and Nizamuddin. They have also introduced a train between Bangalore and Marikuppam. The people of my State Karnataka are grateful to the hon. Ministers for their kind gesture. This train will help the population of the entire Kolar district especially the industrial workers of BGML, BEML and other industries.

Sir, gauge conversion between Yalahanka and Bangarpet should be completed soon as it is pending for the last several decades. Mandanapalli should be linked to this railway line. It will help the people of at least three adjoining districts of Kolar. Hon. Minister Basavagowda Patil has given an assurance in this regard. This work should be taken up very soon. One more new train should be introduced between Kolar and Bangalore via Bangarpet. At least 25 berths must be reserved for the passengers of Coopergaon in Karnataka Express. This will enable them to go to Sirdi Mandir and there is a great demand for this by the pilgrims that others throughout the country.

Sir, the other points which I want to raise are as follows :

1. Gauge conversion of Chickballapur-Kolar should be taken up soon.
2. Central Government has not given importance to the Railways projects such as Kottur-Harihar, Bidar-Gulbarga, Talaguppa-Shimoga, Chamrajnagar-Mettupalyam, etc.
3. Major projects like Hassan-Mangalore and double lining of Bangalore-Mysore have not been given importance.
4. Railways gauge conversion projects have been slowed down in the sectors like Arisikere-Hassan, Mysore-Hassan, Yeshwanthpur-Salem, Mysore-Chamrajnagar, Bangalore-Hubli-Shimoga, Solapur-Hotgi-Gadag, Hospet-Guntakal.

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

5. Doubling of Whitefield-Bangarpet-Kuppam, Kengeri-Ramnagar, Yeshwanthpur-Tumkur, Bangalore-Whitefield-Krishnarajpuram have not been given due importance.
6. The important projects of broadgauging Hubli-Ankola Railway line is not being completed due to lack of financial management.
7. The survey work of Bagalkot-Kudachi, Hyderabad-Raichur, Nippani-Raibag, Dharwad-Belgaum via Ballahongal-Kittur, Bijapur-Athani-Shedbal, Bhigwan-Gulbarga have been completed but unfortunately these projects have not been taken up.

The above seven projects should be given top priority and they must be completed at the earliest.

Sir, the remaining part of my speech, I would like to lay on the Table of the House.

☉ Sir, Karnataka ongoing railway projects should be completed in a time-bound manner.

Sir, thank you once again for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Railway Budget.

SHRI PRAVIN RASHTRAPAL (Patan) : Sir, I have only two suggestions to make which relate to my constituency. There are 30 districts in Gujarat and all the district headquarters are connected with the State Capital and the National Capital by broad-gauge. Patan is the only district headquarters which is not connected with Ahmedabad or Delhi or Mumbai by broad-gauge.

Sir, the hon. Railway Minister who visited Patan in the year 1998, in the presence of Shri L.K. Advani, Shri Kashiram Rana, Shri A.K. Patel and the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, had announced that the 50 kilometre railway track in between Patan and Mehsana would be converted into broad-gauge. But I am very sorry to say that it has not been done. I am requesting the hon. Railway Minister that when he had made this announcement in a public

☉ Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Pravin Rashtrapal]

meeting, he should kindly do it. It is just a question of Rs. 50 crore to Rs. 60 crore only.

My other request is about the Rajdhani Express train. The Rajdhani Express train is running between Ahmedabad and Delhi but there is no stoppage at Siddhpur. It has got three pockets of Rajasthan.

So, Sir, I have requested for a stoppage at Siddhpur, and about converting into broad-gauge between Patan and Mehsana. The hon. Railway Minister should kindly do this.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Railway Budget moved by Shri Nitish Kumar.

At the outset, I would like to make a request that the Samata Express running thrice from Vizag to Nizamuddin may be made daily.

I also request for the stoppage at Rupra Road Station and the Puri-Ahmedabad Express on Raipur-Vizag line.

A railway foot bridge at Rupra Road Station under the Sambalpur Division is very much necessary. I again request the hon. Railway Minister to kindly provide adequate funds for the Lonjigarh Road-Junagarh new railway project. I also request for a road provision for the new bridge being constructed on river Tel on Titlagarh-Kesinga station.

At last, I would like to thank the hon. Railway Minister for doubling of the Lanjigarh Road-Titlagarh section with an allocation of Rs. 110 crore and modernisation of all the stations in my constituency at an estimated cost of a few crores of rupees. We shall be ever grateful to the hon. Minister.

I had requested the Minister to come and inaugurate the opening of a railway station in my constituency. I hope, he had given time also to come. But I was very sad when he was not able to come. Had he come, it would have sent a very good message. It would have been a great

thing. I had requested him to come to Kalahandi constituency which is one of the most backward constituency.

MR. SPEAKER : During your next tenure, he will come to your area.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Thank you, Sir.

With these few words, I conclude.

SHRI K. MALAISAMY (Ramanathapuram) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, while I appreciate with heart and soul the hon. Railway Minister for his excellent way of doing things and presenting a good interim Railway Budget despite all his constraints, I am reminded of my age-old request quite often made in this very same House relating to Tamil Nadu.

I come straight to the point. This is with reference to the regional imbalance in regard to BG conversion. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, I have been repeatedly telling that only 30 per cent has been converted into BG. Whatever may be his reply, the fact remains that it is only 30 per cent in Tamil Nadu whereas in all other places 70 per cent of the BG conversion has been over.

After assumption of Shri A.K. Moorthy as the Minister of State for Railways, something has been done in Tamil Nadu substantially. I do not deny it. But they have been confined only Chennai and around. Tamil Nadu does not mean only Chennai and around. It is more than that.

The project of broad-gauge conversion of Tiruchy to Manamadurai and from Madurai to Rameshwaram, which are very much necessary, have been sanctioned. Funds have been allocated. But unfortunately, the work is going on at a snail's pace. So, they should see that effective management is there. Some timeframe should be fixed and within that timeframe the work should be completed. I hope, the hon. Minister will take steps in this direction.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU SHANKAR MAHALE (Malegaon) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the survey work of Manmad, Malegaon,

Dhulia, Nardana and Indore rail lines has been completed. All these rail lines cross through tribal areas. Therefore, they should be approved. The Sevagram Express should be given a stoppage at Nandgaon besides Nyadongri railway station. The mobile telephony is available everywhere. Trains are on the journey round the clock so there should a facility of mobile-charging in trains. Moreover, there is a need to improve Manmad station. I thank you as well as the hon. Minister for taking up the rail track construction work in Mumbai and Nasik. . . (Interruptions) He had himself done the inauguration in Parbhani. I am thankful to the hon. Minister for providing facility to the people enabling them to perform more journeys.

[Translation]

*SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT (Nandurbar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to give following suggestions in respect of the Rail Budget 2004-2005.

The Surat Bhusawal Western (W.R.) line is the single line which passes through tribal areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra. I have been making the demand for doubling of this track for several years. The Ministry of Railway has not so far fulfilled this demand. Therefore, I would like to demand that the hon. Minister Shri Nitish Kumar should approve this proposal.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajanj, Uttar Pradesh) : Respected Speaker, Sir, I thank you for providing me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the interim Railway Budget. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Railways that he has really done a commendable work by starting gauge conversion of the Gorakhpur-Anand Nagar, Gonda, Gorakhpur-Anand Nagar, Nautanwa rail line. I would like to congratulate him for providing better railway facilities in the country with the limited resources. But the Government of India have not provided as much funds to the railways as should have been provided. The Government has provided enough funds for interlinking and construction of roads. Had they provided even half of that amount for the railways, then

definitely we would have been in a position to save the country from the onslaught of soaring prices.

Sir, still there are several district headquarters in the country which are not connected with rail route. The district headquarters of my parliamentary constituency Maharajanj has also not yet been connected with the rail route. I demand that if new rail line is constructed from Anand Nagar to Maharajanj and Maharajanj to Sisaa, then Maharajanj district headquarters would also stand connected with the rail route. I also want to say that last time when I met him, I had given him a letter for providing the facility of computerized rail reservation at Maharajanj district headquarters. But the same facility has not so far been provided. I would like that this facility be provided at an early date. Anand Nagar is also one of the vital railway junctions. The facility of computerised rail reservation should also be provided there. . . .(Interruptions) Shri Prabhunath Singh ji is being associated with Maharajanj more than Kunwar Akhilesh Singh. In regard to Maharajanj I would like to request that facility of computerised rail reservation be provided there. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

*SHRI VINAY KUMAR SORAKE (Udupi) : Sir, though the Interim Railway Budget just presented does not contain any issue-specific proposals, I would like to raise a few important points regarding lack of developmental efforts on the part of the Centre on Railway infrastructure in Dakshina Kannada region.

The Hon'ble Railway Minister while inaugurating the partially completed diction of Mangalore-Puttur on Mangalore-Hassan broad gauge link, has categorically assured of the completion of the entire section by end of 2004 or early 2005. The partial commissioning of this section has not significantly improved the facilities for which the gauge conversion was undertaken almost 10 years ago. I would urge that adequate funds for this entire project be provisioned in the regular railway budget to the presented later.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake]

The Hon'ble Railway Minister has also assured that Mangalore (Kankanady) presently under the Palakkad Division of Southern Railway will be detached and merged with the South Western Railway Zone based at Hubli, to form a separate Division based at Mangalore (Kankanady). This is a long pending demand of the people of the region and also employees of railways to attach Kankanady with South Western Railway for better redressal of grievances of the local public and also the railway employees who have now to approach the faraway Palakkad Division Headquarters even for routine administrative matters.

I have already taken up the linking of the famous pilgrim centre Kollur Sree Mookambika with Kundapoura Station on the Karwar-Mangalore section of Konkan Railway so that a large number of devotees can have direct access to the Temple Complex without breaking the journey short of Kollur at Kundapura. Since there is no problem of topographical alignment of the track (only for about 20 kms.) the outlay for laying the link track could be minimal compared to the advantages (both commercial and public utility) accruing from such link. I urge the Centre to take up this proposal for early survey by making necessary budgetary provisions thereof.

Passenger amenities on this section need to be expanded as under :

Additional platform shelters at Udupi and Malki considering the growth in volume of traffic.

Overbridges and underbridges at road intersections on Padil and Adayar on the Mangalore-Hassan section as there have been long-standing demand for the same pending with the Railway authorities. Mangalore Municipal Corporation and Mangalore Urban Development Authority have already provisioned a share of the expenses involved in the Padil and Adayar a share of the expenses involved in the Padil and Adayar over/under bridge projects as estimated by the railways.

I would urge the Centre to address the long-standing demands of the people of Dakshina Kannada region in regard to the above proposals.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA (Contai) : Thank you very much. I shall be very brief.

Simply, it is a proper occasion to record my appreciation and the appreciation of my constituents for bringing my constituency within the Railway map of India for the first time. So, history has been created; and the hon. Minister has been extraordinarily helpful.

Secondly, I am also appreciating the great improvement brought about in the working results of the Railways, particularly the significant increase in the receipts.

Thank you very much and please go ahead on those lines.

[Translation]

SHRI MANJAY LAL (Samastipur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak on the interim railway budget. I hail from Bihar from where as many as seven Railway Ministers, have hailed. We, the freedom fighters had been demanding since beginning that the railway station where our great martyr Khudi Ram Boss was arrested, be named after this great martyr. Hon'ble Minister of railways fulfilled this demand of the people and that station has been named after this great martyr. For this I would like to thank him.

Sir, many people remember Dr. Lohiya ji. Hon'ble Nitish Kumar ji has paid a rich tribute to Shri Lohiya ji by introducing Sapt Kranti train after his name. All the people respect Lok Nayak Jai Prakash ji. Lok Nayak Jai Prakash ji was a revolutionary leader. The Minister of Railways has fulfilled the desire of the people by introducing Sapt Kranti after the name of Lohiya ji and Sampark Kranti after the name of Lok Nayak Jaiprakash ji. I am a freedom fighter. There have been lakhs of freedom fighters. . . .(Interruptions) The Minister has paid a rich tribute to the freedom fighters by introducing Swatanarta Sainani Express train.

I would like to say that in Samastipur, we always raised our demand. Whenever the Minister visited Samastipur, we always demanded a train. But now he has fulfilled the desire of the people by introducing Sampark Kranti Express train from Samastipur. He has done a very good job by constructing Diesel shed and restarting the old railway factory in Samastipur. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You may give all other papers to the Minister.

SHRI LAL BIHARI TIWARI (East Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you very much for providing me an opportunity to express my views on the interim railway budget. . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is 5.30 now. I will have to call the Minister, otherwise his reply would remain incomplete.

SHRI LAL BIHARI TIWARI : When hon'ble Nitish Kumar ji was presenting the rail budget in the House on January 30th, at that time he announced 18 Sampark Kranti Trains to be run in all the States. The entire House has appreciated him. Nitish Kumar ji has done a good job for the benefit of the poor and the general public of the country. I would like to say that by providing the facility of reservation of ticket on the mobile, Shri Nitish Kumar ji has taken a major revolutionary step.

I would like to congratulate him that he has fulfilled our long pending demand by concretising the proposal for setting up a Mega Terminal in Anand Vihar under my parliamentary Constituency. In my constituency there is an old bridge made of iron which was built by the Britishers in 1857. Whenever there was flood in the Yamuna river, the aged people of this area feared for the safety of the bridge. Our railway Minister has been concerned about it and today I have read in the newspapers that a bridge would be constructed there with the cost of about 168 crore rupees. This bridge should be constructed at an early date. I congratulate him for this and I would like to submit that it should be started at an early date.

SHRI SALKHAN MARMU (Mayurbhanj) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to submit the following

proposals before the hon'ble Minister of railways for his special consideration. The work of conversion of meter guage rail line into broadguage in Rupsa Bangriposhi in district Mayurbhanj should be completed without any delay. So far this work has not been carried out properly. There is one Budamara railway station. If that rail line is connected with the Chakuliya railway station, then travelling distance between Tatanagar to Bhubaneshwar could be reduced to a large extent.

To do this job, there is a need to construct a bridge across Sawamrekha river which is quite possible. As a result of this, the travelling distance between Tatanagar and Bhubneshwar could be reduced. The other point is extension of one rail line via Chaiwasa Tatanagar.

*Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would request the hon'ble Minister of railways to pay special attention to the following demands :-

The work of conversion of meter guage rail line into broadguage in Rupsa Bangriposhi in Distt. Mayurganj in Orissa be completed without any delay. The Budamara railway station should be connected with rail line with Chakuliya railway station. This work can be completed by construction of a big bridge across the SwaranRakha river. As a result the travelling distance between Tatanagar and Bhubaneshwar could be reduced to a large extent and people will not have to go to Khadagpur.

Rail Line between Tatanagar-Chalbasa-Badbil should be extended. With the extension of the rail line via Kiyonjhar district in Orissa, iron minerals of Singhbhoom, Kiyonjhar etc. can be exploited to the hilt and people living in far reaching Adivasi areas will also get the rail facility.

There is need to construct a direct rail line between Tata Nagar and Ranchi. As a result of it the distance between these two big cities would be lessened which would give a boost to the industrial development in Jharkhand. The existing rail route between Tata Nagar and Ranchi is time consuming because of long distance.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Salkhan Marmu]

Dumka is the second capital of Jharkhand. The work of connecting it with rail line should be done at the earliest since it is a very backward region.

There is a need to address the cleanliness arrangements at the railway stations. There is a need to keep a check on the exchange of money between the railway officers and railway contractors so that the efficiency of the railways is not affected due to corruption.

There is a need to develop the Tatanagar-Badampahar rail section because still this section has large deposits of iron mineral which is in great demand in iron industry. At present the shortage of iron mineral is being experienced in the production of iron. As such this section should not be neglected.

*SHRIMATI RENU KUMARI (Khagaria) : Respected Speaker, Sir, in the past independence history of India, the hon'ble Minister of Railways has done such a work as will be written in golden words in the history of the railways. He deserves congratulations for the same.

The people of my constituency demand that halt may be provided to the Intercity Express running between Katihar and Patna at Moheshkhoont railway station. It is quite essential in the public interest.

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA (Dhandhuka) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to submit that the Minister has fulfilled the assurance he had given for gauge Conversion in my Constituency.

But I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that goods train running between Soomagar and Bhavnagar be replaced with passenger train and the work of conversion of narrow gauge line into broadgauge going on between Veeramgaon and Bahutyadi be completed at an early date.

This is all I have to submit.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

SHRI SHRICHAND KRIPLANI (Chittorgarh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

I am very much thankful to Shri Nitish Kumarji for presenting the interim railway budget and I congratulate him because he has certainly done a good job in the railway budgets presented by him on earlier occasions. I will conclude within a minute. I had requested Shri Nitish Kumarji to conduct a survey in regard to railway line from Badisadari to Neemuch railway line which has now been completed. The whole area is tribal dominated. I request you to get the budget for this purpose passed. Absence of an overbridge between Chittoor to Nimbaheda is a big problem. The work of laying broadgauge from Chittoor, Udaipur to Ajmer is being done at slow pace. I request Shri Nitish Kumarji to accelerated the pace of the said work in order to solve the problem of broadgauge. *Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to submit the following problem before the hon. Railway Minister. The Badisadari Neemuch railway line in respect of which survey has already been completed should be sanctioned expeditiously, overbridges in Chittorgarh and Nimbaheda should be constructed. The broadgauge work in Udaipur Ajmer, Neemuch and Ratlam should be completed early. Neemach Pratapgarh Baswada and Dahod railway line should be laid.

[English]

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN (Tirunelveli) : Sir, I would be happy to participate in this debate towards the fag end of the Term. I have four requests to make to the hon. Minister. The Minister had laid the foundation stone for a road over bridge at Tuticorin. Let it be completed before elections.

I had asked the Minister to develop the Tuticorin Railway Station as also the Tirunelveli Railway Station as model stations. Though it was announced, it has not been completed.

An investigation of a railway line to the non-serving areas – Vilathiakulam, Ottapidaram, VOC districts – of my

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

constituency was done. A survey was done of these areas. Let the hon. Minister expedite the investigation work and allocate funds for it. Though the fund has not been allocated, he can allocate it at a later stage.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Many people have congratulated you. I also want to congratulate you from this Chair. I am congratulating you because you have acceded to my request of subway at Mumbai railway station the need for which was being felt for a long time. There was great difficulty because the construction of the subway could not materialise in the last fifty years. You have acceded to my request. Therefore, I congratulate you. That subway falls under my constituency. I want to ask one more question as to wherefrom you have mobilized the money for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAY (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) :
The money was granted by this House.

[English]

*SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak on the Railway Budget regarding my broad-gauge line construction from Lumding to Silchar. The progress is very very slow because of lack of funds. This is our life line. I demand it should be taken as a National Project completed immediately.

*SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO (Purulia) : I lay the followings on the discussions of Railway Supplementary demand.

I raise several times in this august House for construction of Railway line from Jhargram to Purulia.

I would request the hon. Minister through you to sanction new railway line between Jhargram to Purulia.

[Translation]

*SHRI PUSP JAIN (Pali) : Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards following points. Pali, Rajasthan is my

Parliamentary Constituency. With your special cooperation, my constituency has been availing of facilities of eleven new passengers trains. Lakhs of people of my constituency have settled in every corner of India but they still maintain a live contact with the area and citizens in thousands have to make frequent visits to the area for commercial and social purposes. The citizens have to face a lot of problems due to lack of proper and adequate number of stoppages of these passenger trains.

Several agitations, dharmas, fasts and demonstrations take place daily asking for stoppages of these trains. There is a great anguish among the people. Several memoranda have been submitted to the Ministry of Railways. The resentment among the people is directly harming me and the ruling party. I, therefore, humbly request you to issue orders to ensure stoppage of following trains with immediate effect.

1. Stoppage of Banglore-Ajmer Express should be provided at Saujat road.
2. The stoppage of Jammu-Tawi-Ahmedabad Express should be provided at Ravi Station and Jawai dam and Sauneswar Railway station.
3. The stoppage of Trivandrum Jodhpur Express should be provided at Pali (Distt. Headquarters) Railway station.

*SHRI BRAJ MOHAN RAM (Palamu) : I strongly support the interim budget presented by the hon. Minister of Railways and say that the Minister has made a number of announcements which will prove highly beneficial to the interest of the country and the people. I hope this interim rail budget will give momentum to the development of railways in the country. There are some problems associated with my parliamentary constituency Palamu which I would like you to address so that the people of backward places like Palamu and Garhwa could get the benefits.

A new train should be introduced from Ranchi to Varanasi via Husainabad-Dehri-on-Son.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

*Speech was Laid on the Table.

[Shri Braj Mohan Ram]

Gauge conversion of Tori-Lohardagga rail line should be undertaken and extended upto Tori, and there is a need to speed up the work going on at a slow pace there. There is a need to make the New Delhi-Ranchi Rajdhani Express tri-weekly from bi-weekly and I make a strong demand to run this train via Badkakhana-Daltonganj-Garhwa on all the three days.

The hon. Minister has just announced the introduction of New Delhi-Jharkhand Sampark Kranti Express. This train should be run via Badkakhana-Daltonganj-Garhwa so that the people of this area may get the facility of a good train.

The extension of foot overbridges at Tori station is very much needed. Passengers have become victims of accidents here on a number of occasions. From the viewpoint of safety this work is very essential.

There is a need to construct an overbridge near Tori station as the school going children and the ailing persons have to face a lot of difficulties when the railway crossing is closed. The people there have always been demanding for this overbridge, but this is yet to be fulfilled. I firmly believe that with the construction of this overbridge the local people in this terrorist affected area will be benefited a lot.

The passengers have to face a lot of difficulties as there is no retiring rooms at Tori railway station and incidents of loot are quite common as there is no electricity. The people have to face further difficulties there as there is no canteen, book stalls and STD/ISD booths.

There is a need to raise the level of platform at Haidernagar railway station of Husainabad sub-division in Palamu district. There is always a likelihood for accidents and at times accidents have been reported, too, because the level of platform is quite low there.

The people of the area are not getting the benefits of the train as the Jharkhand Swarna Jayanti Express has been given no stoppage at many places, so there is a need to give stoppage of this train at such places.

There is a need to increase the quota of reservation in all the trains from Daltonganj and Garhwa. The passengers are facing problems as the existing quota is quite inadequate.

The Chirimiri rail line which goes to Mumbai via Vishrampur should be completed.

I, therefore, hope the hon. Minister of Railways will honour the sentiments of the people of my constituency Palamu and Garhwa and consider the above demands sympathetically to fulfill them immediately.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) :
Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. Members who took part in the debate on the interim Rail Budget, proposal for Supplementary Demands for the year 2003-2004 and Excess Demands for Grants for the year 2001-2002. I thank all the hon. Members for this.

Approximately, 34 hon. Members delivered their speeches and some laid their speeches on the table of the House. In all, approximately 50 hon. Members took part in this debate. I am grateful to you for thanking me. I would like to point out two or three things. In the course of this debate on this interim rail budget, some hon. Members commented on the financial state of the Railways. There is a misunderstanding that our revenue has gone down. In my interim budget speech I mentioned that the revenue has not been upto expectations this year, that is, the revised estimate is Rs. 890 crore less. It was Rs. 890 crore has than the budget estimate for the year 2003-04 but, in the next paragraph, we have informed that the expenditure too has come down sharply. In all, there is a decline of Rs. 1490 crore in ordinary operations expenditure. If the revenue has been less than the estimates then the expenditure too has been less than the estimate. If we take both these things together, our economic position has improved. As per the estimate, we contemplated the operating ratio to be 94.1 which improved to be 92.6. Operating ratio means the expenditure incurred to earn Rs. 100. In the budget estimates we contemplated that we would spend Rs. 94.10 to earn Rs. 100. After revision, we found that we incurred only Rs. 92.60 to earn Rs. 100

that means, our economic position has improved. This thing has been taken out of context. At places, the media has commented that there is a decline, then let them know that this is not a decline. There are many reasons for that.

One or two hon. Members said that there has been a decline in the per million tonne income. This is true. We are revising the target of 540 million tonne transportation. As indicated by the position as of December, we will not only be able to achieve the target of 540 million tonne transportation but we will go beyond that to touch the figure of 550 million tonne that is, we are going to handle more freight traffic. This is indicative of our improved economic state. But, the per million tonne income has been less than the estimate. This may be due to various reasons. One reason is that the lead comes down. We thought that the lead would be average but it remained a bit less. There was some change in the mix of commodities. Suppose, we contemplated the transportation of petroleum products to be something which remained less than that while transportation of foodgrains enhanced. So, this has been due to various reasons including the lead according to the overall mix which are beyond the control of the railways. Due to these reasons, the per million tonne earnings have slightly declined due to which our earnings will be less than the budget estimates but our expenditure also will be less than the budget estimates by approximately Rs. 1500 crore. In all, on review of our economic performance at the year end, we find that we are in a better position which we have said in terms of the operating ratio. So, this notion should not be there.

Shri Basu Deb Acharia has gone. He too had mentioned this thing. This way, we are improving both in terms of freight loading as well as passengers earnings. This way, the economic state of the railways is improving. As a result of this, our internal resources have increased and we are putting them into our reserve fund. We are putting that money into the development fund and on the other hand, we are giving more depreciation to the reserve fund. In addition to this, there are two funds for safety. We do all the renewal works in a current year through DRF

and we had to create the Railway Safety Fund which is operational since 1.10.2001, for the renewal of the age old assets on yearly basis. Special Railway Safety Fund has two components – one the grant given by the Government of India as additional budgetary support and the other we impose safety surcharge on the passengers. These two are the sources and an amount of Rs. 17,000 crore will be spent in six years. At some places, we have heard the comments as to what happened to the fund of Rs. 17,000 crore. Let it be clear that the amount of Rs. 17,000 crore has not been given in lump-sum but a fund has been approved in which allocation is made every year. The Railways get money from both the general exchequer as well as the safety surcharge. We fix targets for every year by taking into account both of these. We have experienced that the money expected from the safety surcharge is not realised then we compensate it from our internal resources.

In this manner a part of the extra earning was deposited in the Special Railways Safety Fund. A mention about it was made in the interim budget speech and expenditure is being made according to the target set in the Special Railway Safety Fund. Special Railway Safety Fund was operationalised last year for the first six months. The work commenced w.e.f. 1st October, 2001. It was estimated that Rs. 1,400 crore expenditure would be incurred and out of that Rs. 1,000 crore would be contributed by the Government of India and the rest Rs. 400 crore would come from the safety surcharge. We received Rs. 1,000 crore from the Government of India, but the money received from the safety surcharge was not up to the target. In place of Rs. 400 crore a sum of Rs. 305 crores was collected. The shortfall of Rs. 95 crore was made good by mobilising the amount from the internal resources. Further, we spent Rs. 34 crore more than the amount and a sum of Rs. 1,434 crore was spent in place of Rs. 1,400 crore. Similarly, the target set for the next year was of Rs. 2,210 crore. Railways managed to spend much more and a sum of Rs. 2,486 crore was spent. Same is the saga of progress of the next year. Railways have been spending much more than the amount released through

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Special Railway Safety Fund. Secondly, the actual physical target fixed in this regard has also been achieved. Railways have to replace 16,500 km. long stretch of old railway tracks within the next six years. This is the third year which means even two and a half years has not been completed because only six months were left in the first year. Within that period, we replaced 8,500 km. of old tracks out of a total of 16,500 km of tracks targetted to be replaced. Railways have to construct new bridges to replace 2,700 old bridges or have to strengthen them. By the end of this year 350 new bridges will be constructed. In this way, we are achieving the physical target and exceeding the financial target too. This is an achievement in the matter of Special Railway Safety Fund. Generally out side the House several doubts are raised that railways have been given Rs. 17,000 crore and it is not being spent properly and is being diverted to some other heads. People are free to make their own guess. I was also criticised for diverting the money of the Special Railway Safety Fund for the setting up of zones, which is totally wrong. A list was prepared regarding the works which were supposed to be undertaken under the Special Railway Safety Fund in the form of a green book, which was placed on the table of the House. Not a single paisa can be diverted out of that because it was our commitment before the House and the list showing the works undertaken was placed before the House. If a new item or any new work is proposed to be added therein, the House will be informed accordingly. The question of diverting the money earmarked for the purpose does not arise. However, apprehensions are always expressed.

So far as the question relating to economic performance or planning is concerned, an hon. Member mentioned that the budgetary allocation for the current year i.e. 2004-05 is less than that of the last year. The plan outlay for the year 2003-04 was Rs. 12,918 crore and it is being revised by Rs. 1,000 crore to Rs. 13,918 crore. You enquired as to from where the funds are mobilised? Out of the increased plan outlay of Rs. 1,000 crore, Rs. 500 crore will go to National Projects. The sum of

Rs. 300 crore was received as additional assistance and Rs. 200 crore were mobilised from internal resources and we are making extra efforts to meet the target. On the one hand, railways received assistance from the general exchequer and on the other hand the additional amount was mobilised from the internal resources following which we have managed to raise the plan expenditure by Rs. 1,000 crore. The revised estimate for the year 2004-2005 has been now fixed at Rs. 13,425 crore. We have not yet received allocation for Udhampur-Srinagar national project. That is why it is pegged at Rs. 13,425 crore now. However, the plan outlay for the year 2004-05 is bound to be much bigger once we receive the aforesaid allocation. In this way, be it the plan outlay or the economic performance, the railways performed better. We are treading the path of progress.

As far as the question of safety is concerned, a mention of it has been made. Not only this, the railways have now increased the size of Depreciation Reserve Fund. Some people are expressing apprehensions that the entire reserve fund is getting depleted. We are allocating more funds to Depreciation Reserve Fund which is meant for making up the requirements relating to renewal and replacement etc. of each year. No work of railways get stalled and instead all works relating to renewal are being completed because they mainly relate to safety. Therefore, the railway is spending more funds under the head 'safety' and has formulated corporate safety plan for the year. We have also mentioned about it. Under 'safety' head Rs. 31,000 crore are to be spent within the next ten years and it includes the cess levied on diesel and petrol for improving level crossings and constructing ROB and RUB. Our target is to improve safety by mobilising funds from DRF and other sources in addition to that.

Some people speak without any basis. People are speaking on their own that the accidents are on the rise. Where the accidents are increasing now? We do not know. On the contrary, accidents are on the decline and rather we are aiming at zero accident scenario. As such, we have taken its care in a Ten Year corporate safety plan. Accidents

were minimum during 2002-2003 but one or two accidents took place which proved a setback to the entire railway and everybody takes an umbrage at these incidents. The Rajdhani Express also met with an accident the same year but the fact of the matter is that the number of accidents have decreased. Accidents are assessed the world over on the basis of per million train Km. We stood at 1.5 in this category in the sixties; now we gradually have come down to 0.44 per million train Km. in 2002-2003 and I also announced in my budget speech that in the next four years we would bring it down to 0.30 and after the implementation of corporate safety plan in ten years we would bring it down to 0.17. The fact that perhaps such safety standards are nowhere in place in the world will make us proud. Actually, we underestimate ourselves. All of a sudden, we say that too many accidents take place here and such incidents do not take place in other countries. There could be many causes of accidents. Accidents could occur due to human error, defects in technology. There may be several reasons. Accidents may even be freak, it could also occur by mistake of others and it also occurs due to nature's strokes. There can be several reasons. But our weakness is that we view all these accidents in totality. At the same time, we are trying to eliminate all the accidents caused by human error and non-availability of technology. We have taken steps in this directions. We want to eliminate accidents caused by head-on collision. The Konkan Railway has developed a device and we have started installing this device, at the same place where the Gaisal accident occurred, the one following which I had resigned the office of Railway Minister. The A.C.D. developed by the Konkan Railway is a Safety Armour (Raksha Kavach). We had discussed that over here and you had also appreciated that. We have started to install it from 20 January. We will install it in the entire N.F. Railway broad-gauge network within a year and we will install it in the entire broad gauge network of the Indian Railway within five years. The work of gauge conversion and installing A.C.D. would go hand in hand, its estimate is also covered under it so that where gauge conversion is completed, we will also install the Raksha Kavach in that

broad gauge network simultaneously in order to prevent collision. So we are taking up one thing after another so that we can say that we are moving in the right direction. Criticism does not serve any purpose. But the fact remains that if accidents are taking place, we have to tackle them. We have to see as to what steps we have taken in this direction. It is but natural that the report of any accident would be published and it is also natural to express concern over that. But the steps which we are taking for preventing accidents are not appreciated. People do not get full information about these steps. And despite and best efforts, we do not succeed. It is the safety aspect on which we are focusing the most.

And the second thing is development you might have seen that all the hon. Members express concern that the railway project which is going on in their areas for the last 10 or say, 20 years is hanging in balance for paucity of funds. It is also complained that most of the funds are spent in the State to which the Railway Minister belongs and the remaining States do not get sufficient funds. Many a times, he is declared the Railway Minister of his own State only. To redress this complaint, we have hit upon a new formula in 2002-2003 as I announced in the Railway Budget and according to that formula we allocate all the available funds State-wise. Thus, we have taken a initiative to remove regional imbalance to some extent. Thereafter public-private partners also started taking participation in it and the State Governments also started to invest funds in railway projects. The Defence Ministry also allocated funds on certain strategic rail lines. In addition to this, the Hon. Prime Minister also announced the National Railway Development Scheme. Our high density rail network, golden quadrilateral scheme and its diagonals, where about two third is freight traffic and about half is long distance passenger traffic, are being toned up. Just now Basudeb Acharia ji was speaking. Rs. 15000 crore National Rail Development Scheme has three components. First is to strengthen Golden Quadrilateral and its diagonals. One of its other objectives is that we want to run goods train at a speed of 100 Km. per hour and thereby we want to reduce the gap between the passenger trains

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and goods trains and we have provided 8000 crore for the purpose. We are trying to have quick road connectivity to the distant inter-land areas with ports. Four mega bridges are being constructed in the country. One of them is over the Brahmaputra. Thus Rs. 15,000 crore have been sanctioned for the National Rail Development Scheme. Budgetary assistance has also increased. In all, we have so much funds that we can accelerate the pace of work. But we have seen that even after doing all this, about Rs. 17-18,000 crore are lying pending for the projects even after five years. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we take the projects for laying new lines, gauge conversion, doubling, electrification and suburban metro projects, in total we have projects costing Rs. 43,000 crore and so far as I recall, these projects are 230 in number. After taking so much of initiative, we have seen that even after five years, projects to the tune of Rs. 17-18000 crore are lying pending. I, therefore, take up this issue. I am grateful to hon. Prime Minister and Finance Minister for having realized the situation and approval a remote area Rail Sampark Yojana. Under this scheme in the next five years, as for the projects which remain in backward areas, additional Rs. 20,000 crore will also be provided to complete them besides Rs. 43,000 crore.

In this way, the number of projects provided in the Rail Budget today, which is called Pink Book, include such projects which are included in the supplementary budget of 2003-04. For all these projects, total Rs. 43,000 were required. After the commencement of remote area Sampark Rail Yojana, there will be no pending scheme after five years which is there in the Pink Book till today. This will create employment opportunities on large scale, and there will also be train connectivity. Some Members were asking what is its benefit? There will be a new rail network spanning a thousand Kms. which we want to construct in remote areas. The rail project for Jammu-Kashmir is being prepared as has been announced by the Hon. Prime Minister and trains will start running there from 15 August 2007. You can travel to Baramulla from Delhi

but so far as it is concerned with the rail line from Valley which is from Kajikund to Baramulla, work on that rail line would be completed by 2005, only Katra to Kanjikund would be left out. Rail line from Udampur to Katra would also be completed by 2005 and it would be opened for passengers on 25 March. The Hon. Members from the North-Eastern region were expressing their concern. I would like to inform that 10 per cent out of that the funds which we earmarked for the plan is given to the North-Eastern States. But despite that, the work is not completed there. We have made provision in the Supplementary Budget for the purpose. Provision for conversion of meter gauge from Rangia to Murkongslak into broad gauge has been made in the Supplementary Demands. It was the demand of Manipur State to see the work on Tiffu-Karag which was not completed. The demand of the Government and the people there was a rail line from Ziribam to Imphal and Cabinet has approved their demand and we have included that in supplementary demands for grants. After including all these projects and earmarking additional outlay for the Rail Sampark Yojana for remote areas, all projects would be completed within five years. There is no room left for complaints for anyone that we have not given any attention towards Marathwada or North-Eastern region or, say, Uttar Pradesh, or any other region. The work on all States would be completed by the target time. Several Hon. Members have asked, what is there in it for the common man? One can get reservation on mobile, but are we concerned about common man? Perhaps you are forgetting that we have introduced unreserved ticket system for common man since last year. We are still continuing with our old systems like UTS, PRS in the Indian Railways, which is very old. We are using computer and IT since the time when there were not at all introduced in other Departments, or, say, since the eighties. Expansion of computerized reservation system has been widespread. We have seen that those passengers who travel after getting reservation, enjoy this facility but those who travel without reservation have to stand in queue for getting ticket hours before the train leaves. To solve their this problem we have introduced the UTS and through this system one

can get unreserved ticket three days in advance and moreover, it is also not necessary to get the ticket from the same station from where one intends to travel. One can get this ticket from any other station too for his/her destination. For that, we have introduced unreserved ticketing system. Last year a pilot project was launched in Delhi and that was a success and thereafter we are launching it in other parts of the country too. This move is aimed at providing facility to the poor in order to facilitate their travel. Earlier in long distance trains, there used to be only two general compartments but now we have decided that all new trains to be introduced will carry four general compartments. No train will be there without four general compartments attached to it. Besides, SLR has also some space. Separate arrangements are being made for the physically challenged people. They are being given proper place to sit in and toilet facilities suited to them. In this way we are taking care of the common man and the poor. Keeping in view the fact that comforts of Shatabdi train should permeate down to the common man too, we introduced 16 Jan Shatabdi trains in the year when the railway was celebrating 150 years of its advent.

18.00 hrs.

It is being asked as to that what is being done for the common man. I would like to tell that the facilities like the Shatabdi are being extended to them. We have introduced 'Jan Sadharan Express' on experimental basis. One such train has been introduced. It exclusively travels only with Second Class Interconnected Compartments. This has been introduced on pilot basis since most of the passengers travel with a second class seat. This train has been introduced between Patna and Delhi. The RPF has been deployed in this train. There will be a fixed number of these personnel who will travel from one point to another and if this arrangement stabilizes, a journey of 1000 Kms. could be undertaken comfortably. More such trains could be introduced in future. Similarly, this year we are introducing "Sampark Kranti Express". No State can say that it is being neglected. To begin with, the 'Sampark Kranti Express' will start running from South on 8 February itself.

This train will have coaches of all classes for the convenience of the passengers. There will be general class coaches, sleeper class coaches, AC 3 tier, AC 2 tier and AC-first class coaches also—thus catering to the needs of all classes of passengers. This train will have a crew on end-to-end specific duty and the 'Sampark Kranti Express trains' will be named after the States from which they will originate. In the respective States these trains will stop at some places but out of the State there will be no commercial stoppages. Of course, these trains will stop at places for changing drivers and for other reasons, but there will only be operational halts, not commercial halts. Some passengers get annoyed due to time taking journeys and they want high speed express trains. The hon. Prime Minister has taken steps to facilitate communication in every sector. He has paid adequate attention to the railways, roadways, telecommunication, IT and other sectors also. Similarly, he has introduced 'Sampark Kranti Express' trains in the railways and hence the name of the train, so that the people may be in touch with their respective States in an express way. Thus no State has any reason to complain. For the north-eastern States there is "Poorvottar Sampark Kranti" and for the Northern States when the Udhampur line will be completed, it will start running from Udhampur and cater to the needs of the people of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana States. Similarly, this train will start running from all the remaining States such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. It will run from Goa, Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and also Chhattisgarh. "Sampark Kranti Express trains will run from all the States, be they new States or old States, big States or small States. We have tried to provide such a facility.

Hon. Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singhji has referred to the sky-bus. The sky-bus technology has been introduced by the Konkan Railways and the Prime Minister has taken special interest in it. This facility will be of great help in Urban transport. Since this technology has been developed by the Konkan Railways, it will take some time to prove itself. Efforts are on to attract more stake holders in it. Meanwhile, the Railways have permitted the Konkan

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Railways to invest money so that when in future this becomes a proven technology, this may earn huge revenues all over the world. I do believe that if this technology proves itself, the Konkan Railways will certainly make huge profits. I can say that the name of this technology is sky-bus but once it starts generating income then 'sky-will-be-the limit'. Once this technology is proven, people will be distracted from the Metro, they will like to opt for the sky-bus. Many such things are happening for the first time in the world. Though this issue is not related to the Railways, this technology has been developed by the Konkan Railways and it will have to invest money to promote this technology.

Hon. Member Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyaya ji has referred to the letter written by a famous cricketer, Shri Sourav Ganguli. He has submitted his letter only today before the discussion on railways started. With that letter he has also enclosed his recommendation and given that letter to me. I am glad to inform you that I have collected information in this regard at once. I will send a reply to Shri Sourav Ganguli and also to you in this regard. Permission will be given to use the Eastern Railway Sports Complex. The detailed terms and conditions in this regard will be laid down later. The Ministry of Railways has always been there to promote sports and more and more people are being appointed in this direction.

[English]

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has already built a Sports Complex in Calcutta. So, I have requested him to allow that complex to be used for the Cricket Academy. It will be an inspiration to the whole sports world.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I said the same thing that he will be granted permission. I accepted that and said that a letter to these effect will be sent to you.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK) : Sir, he is smiling now.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : I smile always when I see him.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I would like to point out one thing with regard to the railway security. The issue of security in railways is of concern. We have to pay attention to it. Whenever there is an incident in the railways, people forget the difference between security and safety. What is security? What can the railways do in the security matters? What are the constitutional provisions? We have to take a look on all these aspects. It is quiet necessary to improve the security in the railways. In view of all this, we have taken a small step.

There is GRP for the railway security – according to the provisions of Constitution this is the responsibility of the States to provide security and maintain law and order. This matter has been settled by the hon. Supreme Court also. Mere passing of train through any State does not render it a Union territory. That remains the territory of the respective States. If any incident takes place in a train or within the railway premises, then this is the responsibility of the law and order enforcing agency but the railways are made answerable only because it took place in a train or the railway premises. We too look into it. There is GRP for it. The State Governments constitute GRP. It is also mistaken from the nomenclature of Government Railway Police that this belongs to the Government, not of the railways but for the railways. GRP is a part of the State Police which the State Governments depute. Half of the expenditure incurred on GRP is borne by the Ministry of Railways. Some facilities are also provided to them by the railways at stations which is necessary as they are working at stations. They escort the trains. They do their job but some responsibilities should be given to other railway employees for the security of the passengers.

The Guards and T.T.Es. are assigned some duties. Apart from those duties, there are some heinous crimes being committed. A different type of scene is emerging like the incident of throwing somebody out of a moving train. This is a gory incident. There is a rise in such incidents. Everybody should pay attention to these things. We should try to put check on this trend as soon as possible.

We have RPF with us. The RPF is responsible to take care of the railway property. When this House expressed concern on this issue, a committee was constituted with the representatives of the Ministry of Railways and the State Governments. They gave some suggestions. Subsequently, we brought some amendments which were ratified by this august House in December. Consequent upon the amendments in the RPF Act and the Railways Act, the RPF also can be deployed for the passenger security and train escorting. They can keep on eye on the railway premises. They can arrest any offender if found involved in any crime. They can hand over him to the GRP after preparing a report on the case. The RPF is also being entrusted the responsibility of prosecution and investigation with regard to some minor offences, mentioned in the Railway Act like boarding in the ladies' coach by men; travelling without ticket etc. In addition to this, the rights given to the RPF are to supplement the GRP. This is because that if the RPF takes care of the minor offences then the GRP will be in a better position to control the crimes of serious nature. So, this is a way of sharing their responsibility. RPF will help the GRP in the matters concerning security. The RPF will supplement the GRP not replace it. Therefore, through this august House, I would like to appeal to various State Governments and the political parties that they should condemn such incidents. Generally people think, whatever happens on the rails is related to the railways only. The incidents of security in the railways are blown out of proportions by portraying it as accidents. In fact the railways itself is a victim in the matter of security. If such incidents with our passengers keep on rising then how will they travel by trains. So, we are responsible for the safety but those primarily responsible

for the security will have to launch a massive drive and we shall extend all assistance to them. A quick action will have to be taken on such disturbed sections. We will have to keep on eye on such incidents. There are some adverse reports about the uniformed men. If they are found involved in any offence, then we will take stern action so that people can have faith in the system. Sooner we curb these incidents the better for us as well as our country.

With these words, once again I would like to thank the hon. Members and say that the targets of completing the projects in five years will be achieved. There is no need to attach any priority to any of the projects, we have adequate resources for all of them. I would like to request this august House to pass this interim rail budget.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No questions please. A number of cut motions have been moved by hon. Members to the Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 2004-05. Shall I put all the cut motions to the vote of the House together?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put all the cut motions to the vote of the House.

The cut motions were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put the Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) for 2004-05 to vote.

The question is :

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund of India, on Account, for or towards defraying the charges during the year ending 31st day of March, 2005, in respect of the head of Demands shown in the second column thereof – Demand Nos. 1 to 16."

Demands for Grants on Accounts (Railways) for 2004-05 submitted to the Vote of the House

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grants on Account submitted to the vote of the House (Rs.)
1.	Railway Board	24,11,67,000
2.	Miscellaneous Expenditure (General)	84,66,67,000
3.	General Superintendence and Services on Railways	5,73,30,17,000
4.	Repairs and Maintenance of Permanent Way and Works	11,21,41,98,000
5.	Repairs and Maintenance of Motive Power	5,76,56,22,000
6.	Repairs and Maintenance of Carriages and Wagons	11,41,42,45,000
7.	Repairs and Maintenance of Plant and Equipment	6,30,75,89,000
8.	Operating Expenses – Rolling Stock and Equipment	9,38,62,74,000
9.	Operating Expenses – Traffic	29,53,83,79,000
10.	Operating Expenses – Fuel	27,60,66,58,000
11.	Staff Welfare and Amenities	4,70,05,62,000
12.	Miscellaneous Working Expenses	5,76,57,67,000
13.	Provident Fund, Pension and Other Retirement Benefits	21,86,51,14,000
14.	Appropriation to Funds	32,06,86,67,000
15.	Dividend to General Revenues, Repayment of loans taken from General Revenues and Amortization of Over-Capitalisation	24,45,22,000
16.	Assets-Acquisition Construction and Replacement	
	Revenue	11,66,67,000
	Other Expenditure	
	Capital	65,14,64,28,000
	Railway Funds	10,84,76,67,000
	Railway Safety Fund	1,33,66,67,000
	Special Railway Safety Fund	10,81,96,67,000
	Total	2,60,96,35,44,000

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2003-04 to vote.

The question is :

"That the Supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper

be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2004, in respect of the head of demands entered in the second column thereof – Demand Nos. 14, 15 and 16."

Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2003-04 submitted to the Vote of the House

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Supplementary Demands for Grants submitted to the vote of the House (Rs.)
14.	Appropriation to Funds	187,00,00,000
15.	Dividend to General Revenues, Repayment of loans taken from General Revenues and Amortization of Over-Capitalisation	335,25,00,000
16.	Assets-Acquisition Construction and Replacement	
	Revenue	9,99,74,000
	Other Expenditure	
	Capital	300,00,00,000
	Railway Funds	146,76,41,000
	Railway Safety Fund	6,000
	Special Railway Safety Fund	40,64,15,000
	Total	1019,65,36,000

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put Demand for Excess Grant (Railways) for 2001-02 to vote.

The question is :

- (i) "That the respective excess sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India

out of the Consolidated Fund to make good the excess on the respective grants during the year ended on the 31st day of March, 2002, in respect of the following Demands entered in the second column thereof.

- (ii) Demand No. 15."

Demands for Excess Grants (Railways) for 2001-02 submitted to the Vote of the House

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Excess Grants submitted to the vote of the House (Rs.)
15.	Dividend to General Revenues, Repayment of loans taken from General Revenues and Amortization of Over-Capitalisation	209,58,57,115
	Total	209,58,57,115

The motion was adopted.

18.15 hrs.

**APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) VOTE ON
ACCOUNT BILL*, 2004**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up item No. 16.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of a part of the financial year 2004-2005 for the purposes of Railways.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of a part of the financial year 2004-05 for the purposes of Railways."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : Now the House will take up Item No. 17. The Minister may now move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I beg to move :

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of a part of the financial year 2004-2005 for the purpose of Railways, be taken into consideration."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of a part of the financial year 2004-

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 3.2.2004

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

2005 for the purpose of Railways, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

18.18 hrs.

APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) BILL*, 2004

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up item No. 18.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2003-2004 for the purposes of Railways.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 3.2.2004

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2003-2004 for the purposes of Railways."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : Now the House will take up Item No. 19. The Minister may move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I beg to move :

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2003-2004 for the purposes of Railways be taken into consideration."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2003-2004 for the purposes of Railways be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I beg to move :

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

18.20 hrs.

APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS)
NO. 2 BILL*, 2004

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we shall take up item No. 20. The hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the authorisation of appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services for the purposes of Railways during the financial year ended on the 31st day of March, 2002 in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for that year.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the authorisation of appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services for the purposes of Railways during the financial year ended on the 31st day of March, 2002 in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for that year."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : Now the House will take up Item No. 21. The Minister may move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

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**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) :

18.23 hrs.

I beg to move :

"That the Bill to provide for the authorisation of appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services for the purposes of Railways during the financial year ended on the 31st day of March 2002 in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for that year, be taken into consideration."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the authorisation of appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services for the purposes of Railways during the financial year ended on the 31st day of March 2002 in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for that year, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the House will take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the House will take up Supplementary List of Business – Papers to be laid on the Table. Shri Shripad Yesso Naik.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI BHAVANA BEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA) : I, on behalf of Shri Shripad Yesso Naik beg to lay the following papers on the Table of the House :

1. A copy each of the following notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962
 - (i) The Baggage (Second Amendment) Rules, 2004 published in Notification No. 13/2004 – Customs (N.T.) dated the 3rd February, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum
 - (ii) Notification No. 33/2004-Cus., published in Gazette of India dated the 3rd February, 2004 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments in the Notification No. 136/90-Customs dated the 20th March, 1990 so as to reduce the baggage rate of duty above the free allowance from 50 per cent ad valorem to 40 per cent and valorem.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 8819/2004]

18.23½ hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sixtieth Report

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, I request Shrimati Sushma Swaraj to present the 60th Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Sir, I beg to present the Sixtieth Report (Hindi and English Versions) of the Business Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to make two more requests. Hon. Prime Minister has invited all the Members to dinner tonight at 8 P.M. I personally request every one to reach Ashoka Hotel at 8 p.m. tonight.

Another request to all the Members is to remain present for a group photograph tomorrow morning at 9.30 a.m. I have to make these requests with your kind permission.

18.24 hrs.

BRITISH STATUTES (REPEAL)
BILL, 2003 – *Contd.*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Minister, Shri P.C. Thomas has requested to take up item No. 22 – British Statutes (Repeal) Bill, 2003 – and pass it. If the House agrees, the House will take up item No. 22.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C. THOMAS) : Sir, on the 30th January, 2004, I have already moved that the British Statutes (Repeal) Bill, 2003 be taken into consideration.

Sir, this is a small Bill which has been brought on the basis of the recommendations of P.C. Jain Commission, which was appointed by the Government to review the

administrative laws. Of the 1,382 Central Acts, 11 were British statutes.

Out of this, these four statutes come under the Legislative Department. So, this Bill is only for repeal of these four laws, namely, the British Law Ascertainment Act, 1859, the Foreign Law Ascertainment Act, 1861, the Colonial Probates Act, 1892 and the India (Consequential Provision) Act, 1949.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to repeal the British Law Ascertainment Act, 1859, the Foreign Law Ascertainment Act, 1861, the Colonial Probates Act, 1892, in so far as they apply to India and the India (Consequential Provision) Act, 1949, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1	Short Title
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Amendment made :

Page 1, line 3,—

for "2003"

substitute "2004"

(2)

(Shri P.C. Thomas)

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Enacting Formula

Amendment made :

Page 1, line 1,—

for "Fifty-fourth"

substitute "Fifty fifth"

(1)

(Shri P.C. Thomas)

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

The motion was adopted.

*The Enacting Formula, as amended,
was added to the Bill.*

The Title was added to the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister may now move that the Bill, as amended, be passed.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the House stands adjourned till eleven of the clock tomorrow.

18.28 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the
Clock on Wednesday, February 4, 2004/
Magha 15, 1925 (Saka).*

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