

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Second Session

(Seventeenth Lok Sabha)



(Vol. VI contains Nos.11 to 20)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, December 5, 2019/Agrahayana 14, 1941 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

SHRI T. R. BAALU (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Sir, 18 Indian people have died in an explosion in Sudan. Kindly allow us to raise this matter. Kindly spare some time to discuss this matter. It is the most important matter. ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, 18 Indian people have died and six Tamils have also died in that particular explosion.

HON. SPEAKER: Please calm down. Please sit down.

[Translation]

If all the Hon. Members agree, a new arrangement may be implemented from today. When I do not permit any notice of an Adjournment Motion after the Question Hour, you may raise the issue then. Standing up every day as soon as the Question Hour begins, should this system be discontinued from today?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes-yes.

HON. SPEAKER: Alright.

11.01 hrs

***ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Q.No. 241.

(Q. 241)

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL: Sir, with reference to the Ministry's reply regarding the National Perspective Plan, I would like to say that the river-linking initiative was the dream project of our former hon. Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpyee Ji. When a plan to connect 14 perennial rivers of the North, like Ganga, Brahmaputra, Narmada, to 16 non-perennial rivers of the South was envisaged in 2017, 30 projects were initiated that would eradicate floods and drought in the country and also reduce water wastage. Ken-Betwa, Daman Ganga, Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada projects and two more projects, namely, the North Koel Reservoir Project in Jharkhand and Pancheswar Project in Uttarakhand, were to be started in 2017.

[Translation]

* For Questions, please visit <https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers>.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please ask the questions briefly. The replies should also be brief.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL: In this context, I would like to know, through you, Sir, the current status of the project.

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Hon. Speaker, Sir, the revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji had initiated the River Linking programme. Under the National Perspective Plan, we have identified 30 points related to interlinking, as mentioned by the Hon. Member. Out of these, we have shortlisted four points, and their Detailed Project Reports have already been prepared. If the consent of the other States is obtained on these, the work can be taken forward and implemented. As consensus has not yet been achieved among all the States, these schemes have not been fully executed so far.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL: My second supplementary question is this. According to the 2017 data of the Central Water Commission, between 1984-85 and 2014-15, water in the Indus has dropped by 27.78 billion cubic metres. Similarly, between 2004-05 and 2014-15, the catchment area of Indus reduced by one per cent,

that of Ganga by 2.7 per cent and that of Brahmaputra by 0.6 per cent.

So, what steps has the Government taken to safeguard the river basins of the country? Otherwise, dry periods and droughts are inevitable.

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Sir, as the Hon. Member is aware, the average annual rainfall in India is approximately 3,880 billion cubic metres. Out of this, we are able to utilise only about 1,999 BCM of water. With reference to the rivers mentioned by the Hon. Member, due to the continuously increasing population, water availability within the country is gradually declining. The Union Government, in coordination with several State Governments, has undertaken a number of programmes, through which we seek to enhance water availability across the entire country.

DR. MOHAMMAD JAWED: Sir, we are undertaking river linking in order to address water shortage. However, there are many rivers which, due to lack of proper maintenance, have turned into dying rivers. I would like to cite an example. There is a Ramzan River flowing through the heart of Kishanganj city. During the rainy season, it causes flooding in the city, and after the rains it turns into a drain, leading to the spread of diseases throughout the city.

There are many such rivers and places across the country. Would the Hon. Minister consider removing encroachments from the Ramzan River and carrying out its desilting? Similarly, will the Hon. Minister also make efforts to protect other rivers, lakes and ponds across India?

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Hon. Speaker, Sir, at present, on a priority basis, schemes relating to 30 inter-State river linking projects have been taken up. If such rivers across the entire country are taken into account in this manner, their number becomes very large. If the Hon. Member so desires, he may write to me in this regard, and he will be duly informed about the matter.

[English]

DR. T. SUMATHY (A) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN
: I know water is a State subject but I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that on June 19, 2019, Chennai city official in Tamil Nadu declared that the day zero or the day when almost no water is left has been reached as all the four main reservoirs supplying water to the city had run dry.

The Minister in his reply has stated that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is implementing Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, *i.e.*, AMRUT in 500 cities

with Mission components such as water supply, storm water drainage, etc.

I would like to know from the Minister whether Chennai city is included in this Mission. If so, I would like to know the details.

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Sir, all major cities in the country, including Chennai, where such water scarcity is being witnessed, are under active consideration. An action plan is also being formulated for this purpose. Similarly, under the Jal Jeevan Mission, our endeavour is to ensure that by the year 2024, tap water is provided to every household. Along with this, the current per capita water availability in India, which is approximately 40 litres, will be increased to 55 litres in the coming period.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, if the House permits, may Questions Nos. 242, 244, 247, 249, 250, 253, 254, 255, 257 and 258 be taken up together?

...(Interruptions)

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir, permission is granted.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Sir, permission is granted. Are the Hon. Ministers also agreeable to this? Is it agreeable to you as well?

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS AND THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI): Okay, Sir. ...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: The consent of everyone and of the House is required.

Question No. 242 Dr. Alok Kumar Suman – Not present.

Hon. Minister Sir.

(Q. 244)

[English]

***SHRI JUGAL KISHORE SHARMA:** Sir, I would like to ask Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways about the developmental activities being taken up in Jammu and Kashmir. Whether there is any time limit to complete the repairing and widening of national highway between Jammu to Rajauri and Punch. If yes, then when would it be completed? What is the progress in this direction? Kindly let me know about it.

[Translation]

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker Sir, under the guidance of Prime Minister Modi ji, we have accorded the highest priority to road development in Jammu and Kashmir. The most critical route is the Srinagar to Jammu corridor, where the construction of major tunnels is also underway. With regard to the question raised by the Hon. Member about the highway in Poonch, the work has already commenced. There are certain difficulties relating to land acquisition, and issues have arisen in some areas due to forest clearances. Nevertheless, I would like to assure the

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Dogri.

Hon. Member that by resolving all these issues, we will complete the work within the coming one year.

[English]

***SHRI JUGAL KISHORE SHARMA:** Thank you for allowing me to speak. Through you, I would like to ask Hon'ble Minister whether there is any plan to make National Highway connecting Jammu to Udhampur via Lakhanpur, Kathua and Sabma six lane? If yes, then what is the time line for this?

[Translation]

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker Sir, traffic density across the country is increasing annually by approximately 9 to 12 percent. Under the existing norms, when traffic reaches 10,000 PCUs, the road is upgraded to four lanes. When traffic reaches 20,000 PCUs, it is upgraded to six lanes, and at certain locations, roads are also being converted into eight lanes. In addition to this, construction of 22 new greenfield express highways is currently underway in order to diversify traffic flow. During this period, when the Model Code of Conduct came into force at the time of elections, some confusion arose at the official level due to references to Phase I and Phase II. This led to doubts regarding the availability of funds with the National Highways Authority of India

and whether there was any reduction in the execution of works. Such reports also appeared in the newspapers. After a comprehensive review of the matter, it has been decided that all economically viable projects, such as conversion from two lanes to four lanes, four lanes to six lanes, and six lanes to eight lanes, will be implemented. After accounting for land acquisition costs, infrastructure projects in our country are generally eligible for loans with a tenure of 20 years, whereas internationally, such loans are available for a tenure of 30 years.

Sir, when I placed this matter before the Cabinet in consultation with the Hon. Prime Minister, he advised me to also take it up with the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. I am scheduled to meet the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India tomorrow, and this issue will be discussed with him. Even so, out of the projects that can be structured for a tenure of 20 years, nearly 75 to 80 percent are economically viable. Thereafter, the question naturally arises regarding the source of funds. As the House is aware, we have adopted various models such as PPP, BOT and Hybrid Annuity. We have now introduced a new financing model under which toll revenues will be mortgaged to banks for a period of 20 years, and project-to-project financing will be raised on that basis. After availing such loans, the respective projects will be completed. I am pleased to inform the House that the State Bank of India has

accepted this model and, for the first time, has approved financing of Rs. 50,000 crore. Other banks have also expressed their willingness to participate under this framework. For economically viable projects, work will be undertaken based on toll revenues that can be realised over a 20-year period. A comprehensive plan has been prepared in this regard. I am confident that nearly 75 percent of the projects will be cleared. Project-to-project financing will be adopted, toll revenues will be credited to escrow accounts, and loan repayments will be made accordingly. With respect to greenfield express highways, land acquisition costs are substantially lower, as these are entirely new alignments. For instance, the Mumbai-Delhi Expressway is a single project with an estimated cost of approximately Rs. 1 lakh 6,000 crore. We are also making concerted efforts to capture the value of land adjoining highways through the development of logistics parks, transport plazas and related infrastructure, thereby adding value. Work in this direction is also underway.

On the other hand, in States such as Kerala, land acquisition costs have become exceedingly high, which we are unable to bear on our own. I had requested the Hon. Chief Minister in this regard, and I am grateful to him for agreeing that the State Government would extend support by bearing 25 percent of the land acquisition cost in areas where we are facing difficulties. Through you, Sir, I

would further request the State Government that in cases where projects are not economically viable, if the State Government bears 50 percent of the land acquisition cost, we will be in a position to take such projects forward. Along with this, I have also made a constructive suggestion. Whenever a project is undertaken in a State, nearly 40 percent of the cost pertains to steel and cement, on which GST is levied. In addition, sand and soil are required, for which royalty is charged by the State Governments. I would like to suggest that State Governments consider exempting National Highways Authority of India projects from royalty. The revenue forgone on account of such exemption will be treated as equity given by the state government for that project. If such measures are adopted, it will be possible, in one manner or another, to ensure completion of 100 percent of the projects, and the States will benefit from durable, high-quality concrete roads. This remains our sincere endeavour.

By and large, I would like to responsibly apprise the House that budgetary support is adequate. In addition to this, Bharatmala projects worth approximately Rs. 9.5 lakh crore have been undertaken. These projects are bankable in nature, and the National Highways Authority of India enjoys a triple-A credit rating. There is no constraint in mobilising resources, and the cooperation extended by the banking sector has been very encouraging. In the

coming period, two-lane roads will be upgraded to four lanes, four lanes to six lanes, and six lanes to eight lanes. Simultaneously, economic viability studies of greenfield express highways will be undertaken, and we will endeavour to implement them fully. Additional budgetary support in the range of 10 to 20 percent will also be provided, and all efforts will be made to ensure effective execution of these projects.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please rest assured. I will allow supplementary questions after the original questioner, because today was Suresh ji's last Question. At his request, the supplementary questions were clubbed, and therefore all were taken together. After the original questioner, permission to ask supplementary questions will certainly be given.

Question No. 247- Shri Sudheer Gupta – Not present.

Shri Gajanan Kirtikar – Not present.

Hon. Minister.

Question No. 249 – Shri Deepak Baij – Not present.

Hon. Minister.

HON. SPEAKER: Are you Shri Deepak Baij? What did I state earlier? ...(*Interruptions*) Please put on the earphones so that you can clearly hear that supplementary questions will be allowed after the original questioner.

Question No. 250 – Shrimati Rama Devi

(Q. 250)

SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister has satisfied us by giving a detailed reply. The answers have already been given so comprehensively that I would like to ask only a small supplementary, not much. Such active Ministers are rarely seen.

Accidents on National Highways increase due to potholes, and fatalities also occur in such accidents. Whenever requests are made to repair National Highways, the Government often cites lack of funds. However, today, the Hon. Minister has clearly explained how funds will be mobilised and how they will be utilised. I am satisfied with this explanation. The toll system generates revenue amounting to crores of rupees every month. I would like to make a suggestion in this regard, as toll plazas are located at distances of approximately fifty to one hundred kilometres, and the Government receives substantial revenue through transport-related taxes.

Through you, Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how much amount has been demanded by the Ministry for maintenance works of National Highways during the last three years. How much funding has the Ministry actually received for repair and maintenance during this period? What additional steps have been taken to address the shortfall of funds in the Ministry? I sincerely thank the Hon. Minister for the efforts made in this regard.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, the issue of maintenance of National Highways is certainly an important one. Since our Government came into office, we have taken a decision to construct cement concrete roads, which involve laying cement slabs of about one and a half feet thickness. Roads are also being constructed in your Parliamentary Constituency.

When I served as a Minister in Maharashtra during the period from 1995 to 2000, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway was constructed. Nearly 25 years have elapsed, and even today there is not a single pothole on that road. The design currently adopted for National Highways is even more robust. I can state with full confidence that concrete roads will not develop potholes for the next 100 years. With the cooperation of all Hon. Members, I am confident that we will follow a policy of zero tolerance against corruption. Contractors should not be required to approach anyone even for a single rupee. We do not and will not entertain corruption.

I had once made a remark in jest. It should not be taken literally that if a contractor does not perform properly, he would be put under a bulldozer. We will not tolerate any compromise whatsoever on quality. First and foremost, with the increasing use of concrete roads and converters, maintenance costs are being significantly reduced.

With regard to road accidents, this came to my attention for the first time when an NGO carried out commendable work on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and identified nearly 100 deficiencies which were contributing to accidents. During the presentation, senior officers were present with me, and it then struck me that a highway which I had constructed in 1995 could still have as many as 100 deficiencies. This was clearly an issue of road engineering. Just as financial audits are conducted, I firmly believe that construction works should also be subjected to systematic audits. Only through such construction audits can engineering shortcomings be identified and rectified in a timely manner, thereby enhancing road safety.

We have now decided to conduct accident audits in order to identify the specific causes responsible for road accidents. People are losing their lives due to even minor deficiencies. We have prepared a comprehensive set of parameters for this purpose. Thereafter, we propose to introduce a system of highway rating. Parameters relating to civil engineering standards and causes of road accidents will be laid down, and outstanding retired Chief Engineers will be appointed on a contractual basis to carry out this rating exercise. This rating will be maintained in a digital database. Roads with fewer deficiencies will receive higher ratings. In this

manner, we are undertaking a comprehensive rating of all National Highways under the National Highways Authority of India.

While I believe that our work has been satisfactory in most areas, I would like to candidly acknowledge one shortcoming. We had stated that road accidents would be reduced by 50 percent within five years. With the support of this House, the Motor Vehicles Act was passed, although there was a delay of one year before its enactment. Tamil Nadu is one State which has successfully reduced road accidents by 29 percent. We have adopted their model, including their system of road safety audits. On the basis of this model, we will now carry out inspection and rating of every road, eliminate accident-prone deficiencies, and ensure improved quality of construction.

Sir, another important decision we have taken is to reduce the cost of construction while simultaneously improving construction quality. Generally, Governments are reluctant to adopt new methods. However, in Malaysia, a bridge has been constructed using steel fibre instead of conventional steel. The use of steel fibre has enhanced structural strength to such an extent that an intermediate pillar is not required within a span of one hundred metres. This innovation alone can reduce the cost of bridge construction by nearly 20 percent. We have now made this practice mandatory. An expert committee, headed by Shri Ravi Sinha of IIT

Mumbai, was deputed to study this model. Based on its recommendations, the relevant IRC codes were amended and made mandatory. This will significantly reduce the cost of bridges and flyovers. Tunnel construction also involves substantial expenditure. We are undertaking tunnel projects in Jammu and Kashmir. While the initial estimated cost was Rs. 6,200 crore, a proposal amounting to Rs. 8,000 crore was subsequently received. I made it clear that by developing in-house technical competence and providing appropriate equipment, such cost escalation should not be allowed. We must adopt global best practices in cost-control mechanisms and incorporate them into road, bridge, flyover and tunnel codes to ensure continuous improvement. For this purpose, we have identified two IITs, as there is currently limited scope for research and innovation within the Ministry. These institutions will be entrusted with comprehensive responsibilities relating to road construction, and improvements will be implemented based on their expert guidance. This approach will contribute to a reduction in road accidents, enhanced road comfort, improved quality of construction, and a significant reduction in construction costs.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Pashupati Nath Singh Ji – Not present.

(Q.253)

SHRIMATI RITI PATHAK: Hon. Speaker, Sir, my question relates to the details of National Highway projects in Madhya Pradesh which have been pending for one year, two years, or even longer, and I seek this information from the Hon. Minister.

Hon. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister has replied in a very effective manner, and I am fully satisfied with his response. However, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a project pertaining to my own area, which has been pending for the past eight years. While the efforts made by the Hon. Minister are indeed commendable and appreciated, they have not yet yielded any tangible results in this particular case. Through you, Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what specific measures he proposes to adopt to address a project that has remained pending for eight long years. The people of my area are eagerly awaiting his reply. If the Hon. Minister responds to this issue on the floor of the House, it will greatly reassure the people of my region. I would like to urge that this work be taken up at the earliest, as the public is facing considerable hardship. Every day has become increasingly difficult due to the poor condition of roads. This project has remained stalled for eight years. The contract for the project was awarded in the year 2012, and the year 2020 is now approaching. I request the Hon.

Minister to clearly outline the next course of action so that this project may be commenced without any further delay.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, this pertains to the road project in Singrauli. What the Hon. Member has stated is correct. The project has remained stalled for the past eight years. I had convened a meeting on this matter, which was attended by the Hon. Member as well. In that meeting, it was decided that funds towards the scope of work would be released, and the necessary order was also issued. However, unfortunately, subsequent to the meeting, both the bank in-charge and the company in-charge were transferred, as a result of which the matter was delayed. Accordingly, when this question was raised in the House, I directed that a fresh meeting be convened within eight days. I would also like to inform the House that only yesterday, the Hon. Member addressed a letter to the Hon. Minister of Coal, Shri Pralhad Joshi ji, requesting a loan of Rs. 300 crore for this road project. I had earlier been informed that the Ministry of Coal was willing to provide Rs. 50 crore, since the entire road serves the coal mines in the Singrauli region, and due to its poor condition, business activities have been adversely affected. I will make sincere efforts to ensure that the Hon. Minister of Coal also extends further assistance. As the Hon. Member has rightly pointed out, this project has faced several impediments over the last eight years. When the

meeting is convened again after eight days, the Hon. Minister of Coal, the Hon. Member, and the newly appointed officers will be invited, and we will collectively endeavour to resolve the issues and take the project forward. We will certainly make every possible effort in this regard.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Shankar Lalwani – Not Present

Question No. 254, Shri Ramdas Tadas – Not Present.

Shri C.P. Joshi – Not Present.

Hon. Minister.

(Q. 255)

SHRI KOTHA PRABHAKAR REDDY: Hon. Speaker, Sir, in my Parliamentary Constituency, the Yalgaturti-Siddipet and Rudraram-Medak road projects have been sanctioned, but work on both projects has not commenced so far. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to this matter.

Further, National Highway No. 65, stretching from Miyapur to Sangareddy, was taken up under the PPP model and declared a National Highway. The project is presently under arbitration. The contractor is not undertaking proper maintenance, and the matter has once again gone into arbitration. I would like to request the Hon. Minister to kindly provide detailed information in this regard.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, arbitration is a quasi-judicial process. The authority to decide when and how a decision is to be delivered rests with the arbitrators themselves. However, it has come to our notice that inordinate delays in arbitration are causing substantial losses. Accordingly, we have decided to issue an advisory to the authorities currently handling arbitration cases, prescribing a clear time-limit for decision-making. Whatever the decision may be, it must be delivered within a period of four months. It has been observed that in arbitration proceedings, there is sometimes an attempt to delay

matters on the ground that both the Government officials and the contractor have not reached a consensus, and therefore no arbitrator proceeds with a recommendation. I have clearly conveyed to them that if both parties were already in agreement, there would be no need to approach an arbitrator in the first place. The very purpose of arbitration is to resolve disputes. Where consensus is not possible, the arbitrator must record his own opinion in writing and take an immediate decision. The Government is certainly serious about this matter, and a decision will be taken expeditiously. With regard to the road referred to by the Hon. Member, I do not have the details with me at present. However, I will certainly endeavour to take immediate action in this regard.

(Q. 257)

SHRI VIJAY BAGHEL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I had sought information from the Hon. Minister regarding the National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme, and specifically whether the scheme is presently in operation. In the written reply, the Hon. Minister has stated that the scheme was in force up to the 12th Five Year Plan and has since been discontinued.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister the reasons for discontinuing the said scheme. Were there any shortcomings or deficiencies in its implementation? Further, does the Ministry or the Government consider it necessary to revive and implement this scheme in the future?

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, when the National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme was originally formulated, it was approved with a defined validity up to the year 2017. Accordingly, the scheme was implemented only up to that period. Under this scheme, 573 ambulances and 492 cranes were provided to the State Governments. At present, 9,578 ambulances are already operational under the National Health Mission. In view of this, we have taken a considered decision that the scheme should not be discontinued. The responsibility for its implementation has now been entrusted to the National Highways Authority of India.

Under this revised arrangement, 448 ambulances have been deployed at toll plazas, and a fresh tender has also been issued in this regard. These ambulances have been specially designed keeping in mind the nature of highway accidents. In the event of bus accidents, often 15 to 20 persons are injured simultaneously. Therefore, each ambulance is equipped with three stretchers, along with seating arrangements for two additional injured persons. Further, the ambulances are fitted with specialised equipment for cutting buses and cars. Each unit will be manned by three trained personnel who are proficient in paramedical procedures and have also undergone ITI-level technical training for vehicle cutting, so that immediate and effective assistance can be provided to accident victims.

We have floated a similar tender in this regard. At all toll plazas under PPP and BOT projects, ambulances and cranes have already been deployed. In addition, I would like to specifically emphasise that these ambulances will be positioned on priority at accident-prone locations, particularly on stretches of road where accidents occur frequently. The foremost objective, however, is to ensure that accidents do not occur at all. With this aim, we have formulated two schemes. One scheme has been submitted to the Asian Development Bank. Locations where accidents occur repeatedly, commonly referred to as black spots, are being targeted for

improvement. For this purpose, one scheme amounting to Rs. 7,000 crore has been submitted to the World Bank, and another scheme of Rs. 7,000 crore has been submitted to the Asian Development Bank. Under these schemes, black spots identified on National Highways, State Highways, District Roads and Municipal Roads will be rectified. An amount of Rs. 14,000 crore will be utilised for this purpose to improve road safety across the country.

As I have stated earlier, just as we are conducting engineering audits in the road sector, we will also undertake systematic audits to determine the causes of road accidents. I have already explained the system of road rating. If we work strictly on the basis of this framework, the incidence of accidents can be reduced substantially. There are several countries in the world where the rate of road accidents has been brought down to almost zero percent. Unfortunately, India ranks first globally in terms of both the number of road accidents and the number of fatalities arising from them. This is a matter of serious concern and cannot be addressed without the collective cooperation of all Hon. Members. There is a need to strengthen enforcement, improve civil engineering standards, enhance automobile engineering, and implement Intelligent Traffic Management Systems. Even after adopting all these measures, if accidents still occur, it is essential to ensure the prompt availability of ambulances and cranes. In States such as Himachal Pradesh,

there have been instances in the past where buses have fallen into rivers due to the terrain. We have approved a special plan under which safety barriers will be constructed so that vehicles are prevented from plunging into rivers and are brought to a halt on the roadside. These preventive measures are being actively implemented, although further work remains to be done. Through the National Highways Authority of India, ambulances will continue to be provided from its own resources. Even if the earlier scheme has been discontinued, wherever there is a requirement, we will ensure that ambulances are deployed without fail.

SHRI VIJAY BAGHEL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether adequate ambulance facilities are available in Chhattisgarh. If so, how many ambulances are currently deployed? Has the State Government submitted any request for additional ambulances?

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, at present, 448 ambulances have been deployed at toll plazas across the country. In addition, a fresh tender has been floated, responses have been received, and further ambulances will be inducted under this arrangement. Similar to the practice followed by State Governments, the entire operation has been outsourced. In Chhattisgarh, all toll plazas are operated by private concessionaires, and ambulances are already available with them. The Government

of Chhattisgarh has requested additional ambulances, as have several other State Governments. We have decided that ambulances will be deployed on priority in areas with a higher incidence of road accidents. Extending this arrangement across all roads would require substantial financial resources. Nevertheless, priority will be accorded to accident-prone locations. If such accident-prone locations are identified in Chhattisgarh, they will certainly be given priority for ambulance deployment.

(Q. 258)

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Hon. Speaker, first of all, I congratulate the hon. Minister, Shri Nitin Gadkari ji, on taking special care of the State of Kerala. The hon. Chief Minister of Kerala met the hon. Minister on several occasions and the hon. Members from Kerala also met the hon. Minister. He has taken very serious steps to develop the national highways in Kerala. On behalf of the people of Kerala, I am conveying my thanks to the hon. Minister.

Sir, regarding new National Highways in Kerala, there are several proposals before the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The proposals of Alappuzha-Kodaikanal National Highway, which connects backwater tourism to hill tourism, and the National Highway from Munnar to Kayamkulam via Mavelikkara are before the Ministry. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the DPR has been completed for the same and what progress is there in those projects.

[Translation]

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker Sir, in Kerala, the cost of land acquisition goes up to Rs. 48 crore per hectare. One of the major challenges in Kerala is that residential houses and

buildings are located very close to the roads, and compensation has to be paid for those structures as well. Under the new Act, we have provided very generous compensation. As a result, in a road project costing Rs. 1,100 crore, nearly Rs. 700 crore is required only for land acquisition. Therefore, through you, I would like to request the Hon. Member to note that a six-lane highway is being proposed, and we are taking steps in that direction. Work on NH-66, covering a length of 530 kilometres from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram, is being taken up expeditiously. In the current year itself, work for about 150 kilometres of NH-66 will be awarded. For the projects presently underway, the Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala has also agreed to provide 25 percent of the land acquisition cost. At present, Shri Shashi Tharoor ji is present in the House. I had visited his Parliamentary Constituency for an inauguration. The Thiruvananthapuram bypass was a very difficult stretch, but a very good road has been constructed there. ...(*Interruptions*) It is nearing completion. ...(*Interruptions*) Given the high costs involved, I would state with humility that I am not in a position to accept any new proposals at this stage. The projects that have already been sanctioned should be completed first. Only thereafter will further proposals be considered.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Sir, my second supplementary is very simple and very important. The State of Kerala is affected by natural calamities like severe floods. Almost all national highways and State highways passing through the State are in a dilapidated condition. Almost all national highways are partially or full damaged. But the National Highways Authority of India is not taking any steps for patch work and other works to improve the conditions of national highways. The same is the case with State highways.

The Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal for assistance from the Government of India. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Government has taken any immediate steps to solve the problem which we are facing with regard to the national highways as well as the State highways.

[Translation]

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that due to floods in Kerala, extensive damage has been caused to roads. The Hon. Chief Minister met me and shared detailed information in this regard. We have also received detailed reports relating to National Highways. Accordingly, funds have been sanctioned from our side for the repair of these roads. I will obtain

a consolidated report on the stretches requiring immediate repairs, including details of expenditure incurred and pending, and will apprise the Hon. Member accordingly.

Hon. Speaker, Sir, under the Bharatmala programme, 1,417 kilometres of new National Highways have been sanctioned in Kerala. Detailed Project Reports for these projects are being prepared, and the works will be taken up expeditiously. As part of the measures undertaken for maintenance and repair of National Highways, works covering approximately 6,546 kilometres across the country, involving an expenditure of about Rs. 7,400 crore, are being carried out under the Periodic Renewal and Improvement Quality Programme, and this process is continuing. However, the extent of damage caused by floods in Kerala has been particularly severe. Therefore, I would like to state that, going forward, we will construct concrete roads instead of bituminous roads, as concrete roads are far more resilient and do not suffer damage during floods. Orders have already been issued for repairing and strengthening additional stretches of important roads in your area. If any specific issue comes to your notice, kindly bring it to my attention, and we will ensure that immediate action is taken.

[English]

SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA: Thank you, Speaker Sir. Firstly, I would like to say I am very happy with the answer of Shri Nitin Gadkari Ji regarding road quality and all. I would like to put forward a question about my parliamentary constituency, Koraput. I had asked a question already regarding NH-26, and you have mentioned that the stretch of Borigumma-Jeypore-Koraput-Sunki is in a very dilapidated condition. Can you give us some timeline because the answer is not very clear like when this will be completed and all? You have cited examples like, rainfall, etc., as the reasons for the bad condition of the roads. But actually, the quality of work by the contractor is not good and because of that we are seeing potholes in national highways.

Sir, the people from my constituency would require your assurance that NH-26 will be repaired immediately and we will be able to move on the roads which are at present not even in the condition of CC road to say the least. Can we have some help from you for NH-26 from Borigumma to Sunki, which goes through Jeypore and Koraput?

[Translation]

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I do not have the exact details with me at present. However, I have initiated

a new arrangement under which I meet Members of Parliament from each State for one and a half to two hours after the Question Hour, in the presence of the concerned officers. Discussions with Members from several States have already taken place. I would like to request the Hon. Member to meet me with regard to this particular stretch, and within the present Session itself, we will certainly endeavour to arrive at a solution.

SHRI ARVIND SAWANT: Speaker Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate Shri Gadkari ji, as the Nagpur-Kamptee road is expected to commence very soon. However, there are certain shortcomings in this project. The Dragon Palace also falls on this stretch, and there has been extensive encroachment in the area. Action to remove these encroachments has not been taken, as a result of which such a major highway is being narrowed. No effective action is being taken in this regard. Secondly, the Mumbai-Goa road has been under construction for several years. Through you, Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister when this road is likely to be completed.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Sir, this is indeed a very serious and sensitive matter. While referring to it, I often experience deep concern and anguish. In the Kamptee Cantonment area, a compound wall has been constructed by the Defence authorities. The construction of this wall clearly establishes that the land

beyond it no longer belongs to them and that the entire stretch now falls within the National Highway alignment. Despite this, work has been obstructed by the Defence authorities for nearly one year. When we pointed out that the compound wall had been constructed by them and that their land had effectively ended there, photographs were produced and meetings were convened. Eventually, instructions were issued to proceed with the work. I am specifically referring to the Nagpur stretch. However, when the contractor attempted to resume work, personnel from the Maintenance Command arrived at the site and compelled the contractor to stop work. I have apprised the Hon. Minister of Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh ji, of the entire issue over the past one and a half months, and the matter is fully within his knowledge. Although he is not present in the House today, I would like to raise the issue with him once again. Acquiring land from Defence authorities is an extremely complex process. During the acquisition of land at Dhaula Kuan, the late Shri Manohar Parrikar ji and I had to make extraordinary efforts, which I need not elaborate upon here. Such projects remain stalled unnecessarily. Ultimately, the Government is one entity. If works are delayed on account of such issues, compensation costs escalate due to non-availability of land, and contractors submit claims amounting to hundreds or even thousands of crores of rupees. I would like to urge Hon. Members to examine the reasons

for stalled projects in their respective Parliamentary Constituencies. A contractor cannot execute work without access to land. Even for the removal of a single tree, environmental and forest clearances often take several months. Despite this, we are undertaking large-scale plantation and tree transplantation. Hon. Speaker Sir, the unfortunate reality is that there are many voices urging that work should be stopped, but very few encouraging that work should proceed. As a result, accidents continue to occur, lives are lost, and traffic volumes keep increasing. With regard to the Kamptee issue, since the Hon. Minister of Defence is not present today and as I myself represent the district concerned, I would like to state that I have taken all possible steps and raised this matter repeatedly. Beyond this, it would not be appropriate for me to go into further details on the floor of the House.

HON. SPEAKER: Please let it be.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: I would like to state clearly that work on this road will now commence. All encroachments will be removed. As far as the Mumbai-Goa road is concerned, the people there belong to the Konkan region. Sir, in Konkan, there are instances where a single acre of land has five owners, and disputes arise among five brothers over their respective shares. If one wishes to see such disputes, Konkan provides many such examples, where prolonged conflicts take place among family members. Despite

these challenges, we have almost completed the land acquisition process. Land acquisition has now been completed, and within one year, the Mumbai-Goa four-lane concrete road will be completed. I assure the House that there will be no difficulty in this regard. The entire road will be completed.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Rajiv Ranjan.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Gadkari ji, it appears that inter-ministerial coordination is not satisfactory.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: I am not making these observations by way of criticism. I want to convince the hon. Member that the country needs positive attitude and approach from everybody. I would also like to place on record that I am pro-environment. Environment, ecology and development are not in conflict with one another; rather, they are complementary. My city is progressing towards becoming one of the greenest cities through extensive tree plantation. At the same time, development cannot be stalled. Planting a tree alone cannot be a substitute for widening a road to four lanes. Very often, we witness a lack of coordination at the ground level. After a road is completed, the electricity and telecom departments proceed to dig it up again. Similarly, electricity poles are installed in accordance with a two-lane

configuration, even when a four-lane road is planned. Such poles should ideally be placed at the outer limits with adequate spacing, so that they do not have to be relocated later. These issues of inter-departmental coordination result in avoidable delays, increased costs and inconvenience to the public. A more integrated and forward-looking approach is therefore essential. The issue of utility shifting, including pipelines and related services, is being addressed jointly by the State Governments and the Union Government, and this process is being carried out in a phased manner. I am not making these remarks by way of criticism, and I would like to state clearly that inter-governmental coordination is, in fact, good. There has never been an occasion when I have raised an issue and the Hon. Minister of Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh ji, has not responded. On the contrary, he directs the officers that if a concern has been raised by me, it should be acted upon immediately. The real challenge lies at the implementation level. There is a saying that I often use, that sometimes the kettle becomes hotter than the tea. At times, lower-level officials create situations where work remains stalled for months or even years. Overall, however, I believe that coordination is satisfactory. I am not making these observations as criticism, but only to underline that such issues exist in almost every Parliamentary Constituency. I have written to all Hon. Members requesting them to convene meetings with the District Collectors in

their respective constituencies, along with officers of my Ministry, so that issues relating to road safety and road construction can be resolved in a coordinated manner.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Sir, the Collectors do not call us.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: You may call them.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Sir, we do not even have the authority to convene such meetings. No Collector listens to us. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: I request you.

...*(Interruptions)**

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing except what is stated by the Hon. Minister will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: If all Hon. Members extend their cooperation in improving both road safety and road construction, I am confident that many of these obstacles can be substantially resolved. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN ALIAS LALAN SINGH: Sir, through you, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for significantly streamlining the maintenance and construction of National Highways. However, there is one concern. On the recommendation of State Governments, new roads are being declared as National Highways. As a result, they cease to be State Highways, and the State Governments are no longer in a position to maintain them. On the other hand, the condition of several existing National Highways is extremely poor. In the interest of saving time, I will not name specific roads, but the condition of many National Highways is indeed very bad. Moreover, the funds available with the Ministry for maintenance of National Highways are limited.

Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what policy the Government proposes to adopt for the maintenance of old National Highways whose condition has deteriorated significantly, so that their condition can be improved in the future. What steps is the Government taking to ensure that National Highways do not acquire a bad reputation due to poor maintenance?

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Sir, with due apologies to the Hon. Member, I would like to place certain facts before the House. This is, in fact, one of the biggest challenges we are facing in Bihar. I have the list with me today. A project sanctioned by the World Bank was withdrawn by our Department. When I enquired about

this, I stated that the project had been withdrawn even though it pertains to the Parliamentary Constituency of our Hon. Chief Minister. I questioned why such a sanctioned project was withdrawn. [English] In Fatuha-Harnaut-Barh Section of NH 30A, the project work for Daniyawan bypass and Barh bypass has been dropped due to land acquisition. For 4 nos. of ROB at km 132 and km 135 of NH 19; km 12 of NH 103 and km 100 of NH 327E, the appointed date was given, but work on the said project got delayed by three years. Now, the work is in progress. Land acquisition could not be completed. The Government sanctioned the Koshi Bridge in September, 2018, but 3G has not been done. As a result, the project has remained stalled. Forest clearance has also not been obtained. Furthermore, a tender could not be issued later on. The work on Ghorghat bridge in Munger district has been delayed since 2014. Year 2014. The contractor abandoned the project, and land acquisition could not be completed. The work on total 16 nos. of NHAI project of about 1070 km, costing Rs. 14,452 crore, has been delayed due to land acquisition and forest issues in Bihar. The project for the development of Nalanda-Bihar Sharif section of 92 kms has been delayed from 2014 due to land acquisition.

[Translation]

Once again, I would like to request the Hon. Member not to view this issue politically. I am not making any criticism of your

Government. The former Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India is presently your Chief Secretary. I personally spoke to him over the telephone. I sincerely would like to work in Bihar and to construct good-quality roads there. I would like to request all Hon. Members to extend their cooperation by resolving issues relating to land acquisition and other impediments, and to assist me in this endeavour. We will construct high-quality concrete roads throughout Bihar, and there will be no inconvenience. Wherever clearances have been provided, we have completed the works. I assure the House that with collective cooperation, we will ensure that all roads in Bihar are developed to the highest standards.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Hon. Speaker, Sir, with regard to whatever the Hon. Minister has stated about Bihar, I would like to congratulate him. National Highway No. 19 had remained stalled in our State for the past eight years. Owing to the efforts of the Hon. Minister, work on this highway has now commenced. Through this House, I congratulate him for this achievement. After eight years, the work has finally begun. This is a major accomplishment for the Ministry, and also personally significant for me, as I had repeatedly brought this issue to the Hon. Minister's attention, including through several video representations. I am pleased to state that the work has now started.

Sir, a fundamental question arises here. As the Hon. Minister has pointed out regarding the present challenges, does the Government prefer, as a matter of policy, greenfield alignments? Most of the roads under discussion are brownfield projects, that is, existing roads. Is it the policy of the Government to give preference to greenfield alignments so as to avoid major issues relating to land acquisition, resettlement and the construction of bypasses?

Sir, the second issue relates to the preparation of Detailed Project Reports. Over the past few years, nearly Rs. 2,000 crore has been spent on the preparation of DPRs. In many cases, DPRs are prepared using Google-based inputs. As a result, in some places Road Over Bridges are omitted, in some places Road Under Bridges are omitted, and in other places bridges are provided unnecessarily.

Sir, Shri Bapat is present in the House. He has halted work on one road because he questioned the very necessity of a flyover at that location. At the stage of preparing DPRs, Members of Parliament are never consulted or their inputs sought. Consequently, these road projects later become matter to disputes and controversies.

Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether, in future, when Detailed Project Reports are being prepared or are in the process of preparation, any institutional mechanism will be put in

place to seek inputs from Hon. Members, political representatives, or other relevant stakeholders. I seek a clear response from the Hon. Minister in this regard.

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, what the Hon. Member is stating is true. However, this relates to a situation that existed five years ago. The first point is that those who prepared the Detailed Project Reports would take 80 percent of the payment, but would never come back even to claim the remaining 20 percent. At one of their conferences, I told them in these very words, “Remember this, if any accident occurs because of your DPR, you will be booked under Section 302 and sent to jail.” I went to the extent of saying this to them. There have been many serious mistakes on the part of those who prepared DPRs. It is because of these mistakes that accidents are taking place. The usual tendency in the Government system is that whenever an accident occurs, the easiest explanation offered is that the driver had consumed alcohol and therefore the accident happened. I stated openly that the responsibility lies with the engineers. Mistakes are committed in the preparation of Detailed Project Reports, and mistakes are also committed during road construction, and it is due to these mistakes that accidents occur. Therefore, an entirely new set of rules has now been framed with regard to DPRs. It is absolutely true that earlier DPRs were prepared by sitting at home and merely copying and

pasting material from Google. I do not feel comfortable saying this, but it is also true that retired Government engineers themselves set up companies for preparing DPRs and engaged in such practices. The problems inherent in this system came to our notice. As a result, the entire system has now been changed, and we are also withholding their payments. Their payment will be released only after the work is fully completed. Earlier, only 20 percent of the payment was withheld; now, a much larger portion is being withheld. Consequently, there has been significant improvement. I believe that we are in the process of resolving the problems of the past. At that time, there was no immediate solution available, but going forward, we will undertake comprehensive reforms in the process of preparing DPRs.

Hon. Speaker, Sir, as raised in the question, we are constructing 22 greenfield express highways. It is absolutely correct that greenfield highways follow new State alignments and pass outside villages. This significantly reduces the cost of land acquisition and avoids congestion on urban roads. However, the practical difficulty we face is that whenever we take up greenfield roads, all Hon. Members approach us and request that the existing roads should also be taken up for upgradation and that those works should also be completed. The Government has now taken a considered policy decision that instead of widening existing

alignments from two lanes to four lanes or six lanes, greenfield alignments are a better option. We are also converting these greenfield alignments into access-controlled express highways and are making efforts to establish a new and efficient road network. The suggestion that has been made has been accepted, and we are working accordingly.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, I am handing over to you a long list of Hon. Members who wish to raise supplementary questions. Kindly convene meetings with all the Hon. Members within this week and hear their concerns.

(Q. 243)

SHRI CHANDESHWAR PRASAD: Hon. Speaker, Sir, today the entire world is facing an economic slowdown, and it is natural that its impact is also being felt in our country. Sir, there has been a sharp and alarming rise in unemployment. A very large number of micro, small and medium enterprises have become sick, affecting crores of people. In Jehanabad alone, and across the State of Bihar, approximately 17,500 enterprises have become sick. At the national level, the number of sick enterprises has crossed five and a half lakh. Through you, Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the Government is formulating any scheme or policy to revive these sick units.

12.00 hrs

SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Sir, in the case of a large number of micro industries, bank loans have gone into default. In many such cases, restructuring of these loans became necessary. For this purpose, the Reserve Bank of India constituted a Special Committee. On the basis of its recommendations, loan restructuring has been carried out for a substantial number of units, amounting to nearly one lakh industries. However, certain constraints still remain. Outstanding dues are pending from State Governments as well as from Public Sector Undertakings. As a

result, MSMEs often do not receive payments in a timely manner. To address this issue, we have begun enforcing strict measures to ensure that payments are released within 45 days. Through the Samadhan Portal, representations are received regarding delays in payment, and appropriate action is being taken in all such cases.

Sir, we are also introducing certain changes and issuing fresh guidelines with regard to the two percent interest subvention scheme, so that greater benefit can be derived from it. One positive development is that about 20 MSMEs have accessed the capital market by getting their shares listed on the stock exchange. On the basis of the recommendations of the Sinha Committee, which proposed a provision of Rs. 10,000 crore, we are making a provision of Rs. 10,000 crore so that MSMEs which wish to raise funds through the capital market may do so, and the Government will take a 10 percent equity stake in such cases. We have extended this support as well.

Sir, in the stressed asset fund, there are different kinds of problems at different places. In some cases, there are power-related issues; in others, labour-related issues; and in some, marketing-related issues. It is true that the MSME sector is presently under stress. The concern expressed by the Hon. Member is valid. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of India, a detailed study is being undertaken to formulate a special policy for MSMEs and

micro industries, and this exercise will be completed at the earliest. Discussions have already been held with the Hon. Minister of Finance. Both of us will jointly prepare a comprehensive scheme and place it before the Cabinet, since this sector is extremely important. Approximately 29 percent of the country's growth comes from the MSME sector, about 49 percent of exports are contributed by MSMEs, and nearly 11 crore jobs have been created in this sector. Within this framework, we are placing greater emphasis on rural areas, agriculture-based enterprises and tribal regions. Keeping in mind the concerns that have been raised, we are making efforts to explore how relief can be extended to MSMEs through the banking system.

Sir, another significant positive development is that loans amounting to Rs. 85,000 crore have been extended to MSMEs without any requirement of collateral or third-party guarantee. An insurance cover of Rs. 85,000 crore has been provided for this purpose. By contributing one and a half percent to the credit guarantee trust, MSMEs are able to avail this facility without mortgaging their property or offering any collateral. I have stated today itself that this limit will be enhanced to Rs. 1.5 lakh crore, so that MSMEs across the country can access credit up to that amount without the need to mortgage assets or provide collateral. Further, earlier, under the scheme applicable to loans up to Rs. 2 crore, the

benefit could be availed only once. I have now directed that MSMEs which have repaid such loans should be allowed to avail further credit under the same scheme. Accordingly, necessary changes are being made in the relevant rules. We will also take into consideration any additional suggestions that may be offered to further strengthen support for the MSME sector.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have received notices of Adjournment Motions from Hon. Members on certain matters. I have not admitted any notice of an Adjournment Motion.

After the papers to be laid on the table, I will make certain rulings.

***WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

Starred Question Nos. 245, 246, 248, 251, 252, 256, 259 and 260
Unstarred Question Nos. 2761 to 2990

* For Questions, please visit <https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers>.

12.01 hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

HON. SPEAKER: Now the papers will be laid on the Table. Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): Sir, on behalf of Shri Kiren Rijiju, I beg to lay on the Table:

1. (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Dadra and Nagar Haveli Waqf Board, Silvassa, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Dadra and Nagar Haveli Waqf Board, Silvassa, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1092/17/19]

2. (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Waqf Board Andaman and Nicobar Island, Port Blair, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Waqf Board Andaman and Nicobar Island, Port Blair, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1093/17/19]

3. (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Anti Doping Agency, New Delhi, for the years 2009-2010 to 2017-2018, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Anti Doping Agency, New Delhi, for the years 2009-2010 to 2017-2018.

4. Nine Statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1094/17/19]

[English]

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF
POWER, MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF
NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY AND MINISTER OF
STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SHRI R.K. SINGH): Sir, 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 394 of the Companies Act, 2013:-

- (a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the REC Limited (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited), New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.
- (ii) Annual Report of the REC Limited (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited), New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1095/17/19]

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the NHDC Limited, Bhopal, for the year 2018-2019.
- (ii) Annual Report of the NHDC Limited, Bhopal, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1096/17/19]

- (c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the DNH Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Silvassa, for the year 2018-2019.
- (ii) Annual Report of the DNH Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Silvassa, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1097/17/19]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Wind Energy, Chennai, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute of Wind Energy, Chennai, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1098/17/19]

(3) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under Section 179 of the Electricity Act, 2003:-

1. The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Cross Border Trade of Electricity) Regulations, 2019 published in Notification No. L-113/2/7/2015-PM/CERC in Gazette of India dated 14th May, 2019.
2. Notification No. L-1/153/2019-CERC published in Gazette of India dated 29th July, 2019, containing corrigendum to the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Fees and Charges of Regional Load Despatch Centre and other related matters) Regulations, 2019.
3. Notification No. L-1(3)/2009-CERC published in Gazette of India dated 29th July, 2019, containing corrigendum to the Notification No. L-1(3)/2009-CERC dated 9th January, 2019.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at item No. (i) of (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1099/17/19]

(5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Central Electricity Regulatory

Commission, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1100/17/19]

- (6) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Sardar Swaran Singh National Institute of Bio-Energy, Kapurthala, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Sardar Swaran Singh National Institute of Bio-Energy, Kapurthala, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1101/17/19]

- (7) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Solar Energy Corporation of India, Gurugram, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Solar Energy Corporation of India, Gurugram, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1102/17/19]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Airports Authority of India (Ground Handling Services) Amendment Regulations, 2019 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. AAI/OPS/707/GHR-2018 in Gazette of India dated 24th September, 2019 under Section 43 of the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994, together with an explanatory note.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1103/17/19]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Airports Authority of India, New

Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Airports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1104/17/19]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (GEN. (RETD.) DR. V. K. SINGH): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1)A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under Section 10 of the National Highways Act, 1956

1. S.O.2503(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 12th July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Delhi-Hapur Section of six lane from design Km. 0.000 to Km. 50.934 (Existing Chainage from Km. 0.000 to Km. 50.000) on NH-9 (Old NH-24) in the State of Uttar Pradesh on Hybrid Annuity Mode.
2. S.O.2504(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 12th July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Aligarh-Moradabad Section of two lane from design Km. 85.650 to Km. 232.020 (excluding the structure from Km. 108.264 to

Km. 108.382 of NH-93 (New NH-509) in the State of Uttar Pradesh on EPC mode.

3. S.O.2505(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 12th July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Rewa-Katni-Jabalpur Section of four lane from design Km. 311.585 to Km. 360.468 and from Km. 379.465 to Km. 399.657 (existing Km. 311.000 to Km. 359.500 and Km. 378.500 to Km. 397.000) on NH-7 in the State of Madhya Pradesh on EPC basis.
4. S.O.2611(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Bedma-Dahikonga Section of two lane from design chainage Km. 179.400 to Km. 240.570 (existing chainage from Km. 180.000 to Km. 241.000) on NH-43 (New NH-30) in the State of Chattisgarh under NHDP-IV on EPC mode.
5. S.O.2612(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Dhamtari-Kanker Section of two lane from design chainage km. 81.500 to Km. 129.912 (existing chainage from Km. 81.500 to Km. 130.000) on NH-43 (New NH-30) in the State of Chattigarh under NHDP-IV on EPC mode.
6. S.O.2613(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Dahikonga-Jagdulpur Section of two lane from design chainage Km.

240.570 to Km. 297.470 (existing chainage from km. 241.000 to Km. 298.000) on NH-43 (New NH-30) in the State of Chattisgarh under NHDP-IV on EPC.

7. S.O.2741(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Punjab/Haryana Border-Jind Section of four lane from design Km. 238.725 to Km. 307.000 (existing Km. 238.695 to Km. 307.000) on NH-71 (New NH-352) in the State of Haryana under NHDP-IVB on EPC mode.
8. S.O.2742(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st July, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Dausa-Lalsot-Kathoon Section of two lane & four lane from design chainage from Km. 0.000 to Km. 83.453 on NH-11A in the State of Rajasthan under NHDP-IVA on Hybrid Annuity Mode.
9. S.O.2847(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 7th August, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Agra Road and Ajmer Road Section of six lane from Km. 0.300 to Km. 46.700 design chainage (Jaipur Ring Road between Agra Road and Ajmer Road) on NH-148C in the State of Rajasthan on EPC Mode.
10. S.O.3020(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd August, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of

Jabalpur-Mandla-Chilpi Section of two lane from design Km. 0.000 to Km. 21.850 (existing chainage Km. 477.600 of NH-7 to Km. 22.800 of NH-12A) (New NH-30) in the State of Madhya Pradesh under NHDP-IV (Package-01).

11. S.O.3021(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd August, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Ambala-Kaithal Section of four lane from Km. 0.000 to Km. 50.860 on NH-65 in the State of Haryana Under NHDP Phase-III on EPC mode (Package-I).
12. S.O.3022(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd August, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Kanaktora to Jharsugada Section fo four lane from 0.000 to Km. 68.000 on NH-200 in the State of Odisha on EPC.
13. S.O.3133(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th August, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Four lane of Wardha-Butibori Section from design chainage Km. 465.500 to Km. 524.690 (existing chainage Km. 85.374 to Km. 29.000) of NH-361 in the State of Maharashtra on Hybrid Annuity Mode.
14. S.O.3299(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of two laning with paved Shoulder of Rudhauri to Basti side of Ghaghra Bridge section from design Km. 65.870 to Km.

122.300 of NH-233 in the State of Uttar Pradesh under NHDP-IV on EPC mode.

15. S.O.3300(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of 4 laning of Ambala-Kaithal Section from design Km. 50.860 to Km. 95.418 (existing Km. 46.980 to Km. 88.135) of NH-65 in the State of Haryana under NHDP Phase-III (Package-II) on EPC mode.
- 16.S.O.3301(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Four laning of Bijapur-Gulbarga-Homnabad section from design Km. 195.000 to Km. 415.010 of NH-218 (New NH-50) in the State of Karnataka under NHDP Phase-IV on EPC.
- 17.S.O.3302(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Two laning of Bhopal-Sanchi Section from design Km. 0.000 to Km. 53.775 of NH-86 in the State of Madhya Pradesh under NHDP-III on EPC mode.
- 18.S.O.3303(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Four laning of Kullu-Manali Section from design Km. 272.000 to Km. 309.345 of NH-21 (New NH-3) in the State of Himachal Pradesh under NHDP Phase-IVB on EPC mode.

- 19.S.O.3433(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 23rd September, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Four laning of Kota Darah Section from design chainage Km. 256.550 to Km. 290.880 (New chainage Km. 263.160 to Km. 297.490) of NH-12 in the State of Rajasthan on EPC mode.
- 20.S.O.3606(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 4th October, 2019, regarding rates of fees to be recovered from the users of National Highway No. 354 (old NH 21)(Khemkaran Town to Amritsar Bypass Section) in the State of Punjab on EPC mode.
- 21.S.O.3745(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 18th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Two laning of Eepuripalem-Ongole Section from Km. 195.000 to Km. 254.500 (Design Chainage from Km. 184.910 to Km.242.784) of NH-214A (New NH-216) in the State of Andhra Pradesh under NHDP-IV on EPC mode.
- 22.S.O.3746(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 18th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Four laning of Yavatmal-Wardha Section from design chainage Km. 400.575 to Km. 465.500 of NH-361 in the State of Maharashtra on Hybrid Annuity Mode.
- 23.S.O.3747(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 18th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of 4/6

laning of UP/Haryana Border – Yamunanagar-Saha-Barwala-Panchkula Section from Km. 119.022 to Km. 176.400 (existing Km. 118.754 to Km. 179.249) of NH-73 (new NH-7 & 344) in the State of Haryana on EPC mode.

24.S.O.3748(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 18th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Four laning of Rewa-Katni-Jabalpur Section from design Ch. 242.400 to Km. 311.585 (existing Ch. Km. 242.600 to 311.000) of NH-7 (New NH-30) in the State of Madhya Pradesh under NHDP Phase-IV on EPC mode (Package-I).

25.S.O.3749(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 18th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Four laning of Raipur-Bilaspur Section from Design Chainage Km. 48.580 to Km. 126.525 (existing chainage Km. 45.860 to Km. 124.650) of NH-200 (New NH-130 & 49) in the State of Chhattisgarh under NHDP-IV on EPC mode.

26.S.O.3839(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 24th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the project of Four laning of Borkheddi-Yerla-Maharashtra/Telangana Border Section from Km. 36.600 to Km. 174.750 of NH-7 in the State of Maharashtra on EPC.

27.S.O.3840(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 24th October, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of

Four laning of Mahulia-Bahragora-JH/WB Border Section from existing Km. 277.500 to Km. 333.500 of NH-33 (New NH-18) and Bahragora-Kharagpur Section of NH-6 (New NH-49) from existing Km. 199.200 to Km. 13.587 in the State of Jharkhand on EPC mode.

28.S.O.3980(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 4th November, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Two laning of Chhapra Gopalganj Section from design Km. 0.000 to design Km. 94.258 (existing chainage Km. 0.000 to Km. 93.500) of NH-85 in the State of Bihar Under NHDP-III on EPC.

29.S.O.3981(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 4th November, 2019, regarding fee notification for the Project of Four laning of Rewa-Katni-Jablapur Section from design Km. 399.657 to Km. 467.916 (existing Km. 397.000 to Km. 465.500) of NH-7 (New NH-30) in the State of Madhya Pradesh under NHDP Phase-IV (Package-IV) on EPC mode.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1105/17/19]

(2) A copy of the Highway Administration (Amendment) Rules, 2019 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R.658(E) in Gazette of India dated 16th September, 2019 under sub-section (3) of Section 50 of the Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1106/17/19]

(3) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) issued under Section 3 of the Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002:-

(i) S.O.3292(E) published in Gazette of India dated 16th September, 2019, regarding establishment of Highway Administration under sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the said Act.

(4) S.O.3293(E) published in Gazette of India dated 16th September, 2019, regarding establishment of Highway Administration under sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the said Act.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1107/17/19]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

1. A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under Section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-
 - (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Kerala Land Development Corporation Limited, Thiruvananthapuram, for the year 2013-2014.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Kerala Land Development Corporation Limited, Thiruvananthapuram, for the year 2013-2014, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.
2. Statement showing reasons for the delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above (Hindi and English versions).

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1108/17/19]

3. (i) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, New

Delhi, for the year 2017-18, together with Audit Report thereon.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) on the Audited Accounts of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, New Delhi, for the year 2017-18.

4. Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1109/17/19]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING (SHRI PRATAP CHANDRA SARANGI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Hyderabad, for the year 2017-2018, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the

National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Hyderabad, for the year 2017-2018.

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

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1110/17/19]

- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Centre (Indo German Tool Room), Aurangabad, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Centre (Indo German Tool Room), Aurangabad, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1111/17/19]

- (4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Central Footwear Training Institute), Agra, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the

MSME-Technology Development Centre (Central Footwear Training Institute), Agra, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1112/17/19]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Process Cum Product Development Centre), Meerut, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Process Cum Product Development Centre), Meerut, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1113/17/19]

- (6) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Tool Room (Indo German Tool Room), Ahmedabad, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the

MSME-Tool Room (Indo German Tool Room), Ahmedabad, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1114/17/19]

(7) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Centre (Central Tool Room), Ludhiana, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Centre (Central Tool Room), Ludhiana, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1115/17/19]

(8) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Tool Room (Central Tool Room and Training Centre), Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Tool Room (Central Tool Room and Training Centre), Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1116/17/19]

- (9) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Centre (Central Institute of Hand Tools), Jalandhar, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Centre (Central Institute of Hand Tools), Jalandhar, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1117/17/19]

- (10) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre, Kannauj, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre, Kannauj, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1118/17/19]

- (11) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Centre for the Development of Glass Industry), Firozabad, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Centre for the Development of Glass Industry), Firozabad, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1119/17/19]

- (12) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Central Footwear Training Institute), Chennai, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Central Footwear Training Institute), Chennai, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1120/17/19]

(13) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Electronics Service and Training Centre), Nainital, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Technology Development Centre (Electronics Service and Training Centre), Nainital, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1121/17/19]

(14) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the MSME-Tool Room (Indo-German Tool Room), Indore, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the MSME-Tool Room (Indo-German Tool Room), Indore, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1122/17/19]

- (15) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Coir Board, Kochi, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Coir Board, Kochi, for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1123/17/19]

12.04 hrs

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report the following messages received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha: -

1. “In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 3rd December, 2019 agreed without any amendment to the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 27th November, 2019.”
 2. In accordance with the provisions of Rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 3rd December, 2019 agreed without any amendment to the Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 27th November, 2019.”
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12.05 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

Ist and 2nd Reports

[Translation]

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL (WEST CHAMPARAN): Sir, I present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Water Resources (2019-2020) :-

- (1) First Report (Hindi and English versions) on 'Demands for Grants' (2019-20) of the Ministry of Jal Shakti - Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.
 - (2) Second Report (Hindi and English versions) on 'Demands for Grants' (2019-20) of the Ministry of Jal Shakti - Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
-

12.05 1/2 hrs

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON CHEMICALS AND
FERTILIZERS**

Action Taken Report

[English]

SHRIMATI

KANIMOZHI

KARUNANIDHI

(THOOTHUKKUDI): I beg to present the First Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers on Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-fourth Report of the Committee (2018-19) on 'Pricing of Drugs with Special Reference to Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013' of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers (Department of Pharmaceuticals).

12.05 ¾ hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Ist to 3rd Reports

[Translation]

SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV (BULDHANA): Sir, I present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Rural Development:-

- (1) First Report on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20)' of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development).
- (2) Second Report on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20)' of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- (3) Third Report on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20)' of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources).

HON. SPEAKER: Now, Zero Hour, the Hour of all.

Shri Adhir Ranjan ji.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOUDHURY (BAHARAMPUR):

Sir, I would like to raise a serious matter in this House and place it before the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of State. I would like to draw the attention of the House to a grave incident. You may be aware that in the naxal-affected Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh, at an ITBP camp located in Karanar, there has been an incident of internal firing within our paramilitary forces. It has been reported that one jawan opened indiscriminate fire on his fellow personnel, resulting in the death of six jawans and leaving two others seriously injured. What is the reason behind such an incident? The Government must certainly be aware of the facts. It is a matter of deep concern that incidents of this nature are increasingly occurring within our paramilitary forces. Such incidents are not witnessed in the Navy, nor in the Air Force, and occur far less frequently in the Army. However, there has been a noticeable rise in such incidents within the paramilitary forces. This situation gives rise to serious questions. It may be that adequate facilities are not being provided, or that a suitable working environment is not being ensured. There may be other deficiencies as well. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why such tragic incidents continue to take place.

There should be arrangements for psychological counselling and support in every camp, or at least at the regional level, for such

personnel. It is deeply distressing that jawans who leave their homes and families to serve and protect the nation are subjected to such levels of stress. Why does such mental pressure build up, and why does such extreme agitation arise that they end up opening fire on their own colleagues? This issue needs to be addressed with utmost seriousness. ...(*Interruptions*) Kindly allow him to be heard.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOUDHURY: Please allow the Hon. Minister to listen. The most important point is that such incidents do not occur in the Navy, nor do they occur in the Air Force. Why then does the Government not seek guidance from these forces so that such incidents do not take place within our paramilitary forces? Consultation with them can certainly be undertaken. At the very least, our young soldiers should not lose their lives in such incidents of internal violence. This matter must be taken with due seriousness. ...(*Interruptions*) The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah ji, should at least make a statement on this issue.

HON. SPEAKER: Your concern has been taken seriously and conveyed to the Government.

[English]

SHRI T. R. BAALU (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Sir, I am very sorry to state that 18 Indians employed in Sudan have died yesterday due to tanker blast.

I would request, through you, the hon. Minister of External Affairs to kindly see that all the bodies are brought here as quickly as possible and transported to their respective destinations. Specially six Tamilians have died in that blast. Moreover, proper compensation should be given by the Ministry of External Affairs as well as the Sudan Government. The Minister of External Affairs should quickly get into action to see that steps are taken in this regard.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri D.N.V. Senthilkumar S. is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri T. R. Baalu.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (SARAN): Hon. Speaker, Sir, the incident in Sudan is a deeply tragic one. 18 Indians have lost their lives in the blast. Among them are people from Bihar, including persons from my own Parliamentary Constituency. I would like to urge the Hon. Minister that the Government should, at the very least, make arrangements to bring the mortal remains back to India. Through you, Sir, I would also request the Hon. Minister to ensure that whatever compensation is due to the victims abroad is secured,

and that the Ministry of External Affairs and our Embassy in Sudan extend all possible assistance and facilities to the bereaved families. I would like to request that this matter be accorded special priority.

HON. SPEAKER: Shrimati Rekha Verma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

[English]

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (KOLKATA UTTAR): Sir, price rise has become a serious issue in the whole of the country today. Normally, through the Government's Price Monitoring Cell, 22 essential commodities are monitored and distributed. These items are: rice, wheat, atta, gram dal, arhar dal, moog, dal, urad dal, masur dal, tea, salt, sugar, Vanaspati, groundnut oil, mustard oil, milk, palm oil, soya oil, sunflower oil, gur, potato, onion and tomato.

Sir, suddenly, the prices of onions followed by potato have gone to an extreme height. We are all concerned about it. What is the percentage of increase in price? I would just tell you that the average retail price of onions as on November, 2019 rose by 61.94 per cent over the month, and 243.64 per cent over the year.

So, I feel that the Government of India should send directions to all the State Governments to make active the Enforcement Department because Enforcement Department is a State subject. If

ED becomes active in the State, de-hoarding can be made over there because hoarding is the main cause of price rise.

Sir, our Chief Minister of West Bengal, Ms. Mamata Banerjee visits the market to do personal survey as to why prices are increasing of such items. This process of visit can be one of the major steps whereby Chief Ministers of the States can visit and know the real situation on the ground.

Also, the Price Monitoring Cell should be more active. They should rise to the occasion at proper time.

Sir, there is a proverb: "A stitch in time saves nine." If corrective action is taken at the right time, a small measure is sufficient; if action is delayed, much greater intervention becomes necessary later.

Price of onions has gone out of the limit and out of the hand. I would say that it is the failure of the Government of India and we all condemn it.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Sir, I had moved an Adjournment Motion today, and you did not allow it. But you said that you would allow me to raise this issue during *Zero Hour*. Hence I am raising this urgent and important issue, now.

Sir, it has been published in all the newspapers that the private telecom players have hiked the rates of prepaid services of mobile telephones by 40 per cent.

This unreasonable and steep tariff hike of prepaid services by the private mobile operators in the country has caused concern and added an additional burden on the customers, who had been utilising competitive rates till now.

This tariff hike is a contravention to the guarantee and commitment made to the customers by these companies, and it has almost ended the era of free and unlimited calling, which was a feature the telecom operators boasted about.

Sir, three telecom companies, namely, Vodafone-Idea, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, who command the prepaid mobile services market, are clearly colluding to pass their inefficiencies and operating expenses on to the poor consumers. There is a cartel behind this, which is very unfortunate.

Sir, from time to time, we have been telling and it is our allegation that this Government is pro-corporates, pro-multinationals and pro-rich.

Sir, on the other hand, BSNL-MTNL is facing a severe financial crunch. The Government of India has not taken any step to revive the BSNL-MTNL. At the same time, this Government has always

given permission to private telecom operators to hike the prices of mobile telephony. The Government has opened the door for them to do anything. This is against the interest of the common people of this country.

So, I would request the hon. Minister to take necessary steps so that this price hike is rolled back immediately. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH PANDEY (RAJNANDAGAON): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I sincerely thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. In my Parliamentary Constituency of Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh, there is a religious town called Dongargarh, where the revered Mother Goddess is situated at a height of about 1,600 feet. Lakhs of devotees from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and neighbouring States visit this place during Navratri and Chaitra Navratri. The inter-State road connecting Dongargarh and Bortalao links Chhattisgarh with Maharashtra. The length of this road is 15.30 kilometres. Under the RRP-II scheme, administrative approval amounting to Rs. 744.63 lakh was granted by the Ministry of Rural Development through the Sub-Divisional Officer, Dongargarh, Public Works Department. However, due to varying geographical conditions, differences in land and soil type, and heavy traffic pressure, a revised estimate of Rs. 1,392.69 lakh has

been pending since 22.09.2019 with the Director, National Rural Roads Development Agency. The road has already been inspected by a Central team, but construction work is being delayed.

Through you, I would like to request the Hon. Minister to kindly approve the amount as per the revised estimate and ensure that the work is commenced at the earliest.

[English]

KUNWAR DANISH ALI (AMROHA): Thank you very much, hon. Speaker, Sir. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was introduced in 2000 to bridge the gap between the social category and the quality of education in response to the growing demand of quality education. The aim of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was to allow children to learn harness the human potential to its maximum, working on the principle of community solidarity, opportunity of free expression and communication.

[Translation]

Just as District Institutes of Education and Training existed earlier, the Government introduced the concept of Block Institutes of Teacher Education. Under this initiative, SC, ST and minority-concentrated blocks were included within the BITE framework. In Uttar Pradesh, there were about 21 minority-concentrated blocks and 15 SC and ST blocks. However, the Government ultimately

sanctioned only eight BITEs in minority-concentrated districts of the State. These include Moradabad, Bareilly, Amroha, Bulandshahr, Saharanpur, Barabanki, Lucknow and Badaun, among others. In my Parliamentary Constituency of Amroha, one BITE has been established. However, over the past five years, only a single instalment has been released by the Central Government for the BITE located in Hasanpur Tehsil. This Government repeatedly speaks of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas”, yet so far the Ministry of Human Resource Development has not released even a single instalment to the Government of Uttar Pradesh for this purpose. Teachers belonging to Dalit and minority communities are willing and prepared to undergo training, but they are being deprived of this opportunity due to the non-release of funds.

I would like to request that the Government be directed to take appropriate and immediate action in this matter.

انسٹی بلاک سرکار ہی ویسے تھا، ڈائٹ جیسے: (امروہ) علی دانش کنور اور ٹی۔ ایس۔ ایس۔ سی۔، وہاں تھی۔ لائی کنسیپٹ کا ایجوکیشن ٹیچرس آف ٹیوٹ 21 قریباً میں پردیش اتر ہی ایسے تھا۔ گیا لیا میں بانٹ کو کنسنٹریٹ مانوریتی فائنلی نے سرکار لیکن تھے، بلاکس ایس۔ ٹی۔ سی۔ ایس۔ 15 اور بلاکس مانوریتی میں ان ہیں۔ دئیے میں ڈسٹرکٹس کنسنٹریٹڈ مانوریتی میں پردیش اتر بلاکس 8

وغیرہ ہدایوں اور لکھنؤ، بنکی بارہ سہارنپور، شہر، بلند امروبہ، بریلی، مرادآباد، پور حسن سے سال 5 پچھلے ہے۔ بائٹ ایک میں امروبہ حلقہ پارلیمانی میرے ہیں۔ ساتھ، کا سب سرکار یہ ہے۔ آئی قسط ایک صرف سے سرکار مرکزی میں تحصیل منسٹری ایچ۔آر۔ڈی۔ تک ابھی لیکن ہے، کرتی بات کی وشواس کا سب وکاس کا سب ٹیچرس کے اقلیتوں اور دلتوں ہے۔ دی نہیں کو سرکار پردیش اتر قسط بھی ایک نے ہے۔ رہا مل نہیں موقع کو ان لیکن ہیں، سکتے کر ٹریننگ سے آرام

جائیں۔ دی ہدایت کو سرکار کہ ہے گزارش سے آپ میری

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Kunwar Danish Ali.

SHRI JASBIR SINGH GILL (KHADOOR SAHIB): Thank you Speaker *sahib*. Punjab has fought many battles for the country on many fronts. We need more respect and recognition. But, since September, till date, Punjab's share in GST, which amounts to Rs.6,200 crore, and Punjab's share in the Central taxes, which is almost Rs.1,000 crore, has not been given to Punjab. Punjab has 3.5 lakh employees and the monthly pay bill is Rs.2,000 crore and the monthly pension bill is Rs.950 crore. We are in a state of financial emergency because we are not getting our share from the Central Government. We do not have any funds for development. We are borrowing money to pay salaries.

I would request the Government to kindly release our share in GST and Central tax as soon as possible. Thank you.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Jasbir Singh Gill.

SHRI RAHUL KASWAN (CHURU): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to certain serious issues relating to National Highways passing through my Parliamentary Constituency. The prescribed speed limit on National Highways is 90 to 100 kilometres per hour. However, it is frequently observed that where highways pass through villages, speed breakers are constructed. In many cases, these speed breakers have neither white markings nor warning signboards. When a vehicle encounters an unmarked speed breaker suddenly, the risk of accidents increases substantially, and passengers are also likely to suffer injuries.

There are several such locations within my constituency of Churu where speed breakers have been constructed on National Highways, and I would like to request that these be removed. Further, in villages where four-lane highways have been constructed, service lanes are often not provided. In my area, NH-52 passes through Rajaldesar and Ratangarh. Although the four-lane highway has been constructed, the absence of service lanes is

causing serious inconvenience to local residents. Moreover, in my constituency, while Road Over Bridges have been constructed, adequate planning for Vehicle Underpasses has not been undertaken. Due to shortcomings on the part of consultants, the public is compelled to suffer. I submit that in every village through which a highway passes, at least one Vehicle Underpass should be provided, so that villagers are facilitated and highway users do not face unnecessary inconvenience.

HON. SPEAKER: I would like to request Hon. Members to keep track of the time displayed before them. Each Member is allowed one minute, with an additional grace period of fifteen seconds.

Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Rahul Kaswan.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (JALAUN): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My Parliamentary Constituency of Jalaun, along with Garautha and Bhavaniyapur, falls within the Bundelkhand region. The construction of new railway lines in Bundelkhand is extremely essential, as it would provide much-needed connectivity and transportation facilities for the poor and backward sections of the region. I distinctly recall that in the year 1977, when the Janata Party Government was in power at the Centre, work on a new

railway line from Konch to Bhed, Jalaun, Hadhruk, Kuthaund and Dibiyapur was initiated up to the earthwork stage. Further, in the Union Budget of 2016, proposals were made for the construction of railway lines from Bhind to Lahar and Konch, and from Konch to Rath, Charkhari and Mahoba. However, no progress has been made on these projects till date. I would like to request the Union Government to kindly include both these railway lines in the forthcoming Union Budget for the year 2020-2021, so that the people of Bundelkhand may finally receive the long-pending benefits of railway connectivity.

HON. SPEAKER: Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma.

SHRIMATI NAVNEET RAVI RANA (AMRAVATI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. At the outset, I would like to sincerely congratulate and thank the Hon. Prime Minister for implementing the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana across all States of the country. This scheme will greatly benefit the poor and needy sections of society in Maharashtra. Many people currently living in slum areas are residing on encroached land and have been living in their respective villages and cities for the past 20 to 25 years. Today, they nurture a legitimate aspiration that by the year 2022, every needy person should have a house of their own.

However, several procedural and practical difficulties arise in availing the benefits of this scheme. For instance, if a person does not possess permanent residence proof either for the concerned city or for multiple cities, they are unable to avail themselves of the benefits under the scheme. I would like to bring to the notice of the House that the districts of Yavatmal, Akola, Washim and Buldhana fall within the Amravati region, and the total population of this area is approximately one and a half crore. Out of a population of one and a half crore, only about two and a quarter lakh people have been provided houses. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, only this limited number of people have benefited so far. However, what is the timeline and the plan for completing this scheme for the remaining nearly one crore people? I would like to make a brief request in this regard. In the Amravati Municipal Corporation area, around 65,000 application forms have been submitted, but houses have been allotted to only about 6,000 people. If we look at the number of residents and voters, this figure exceeds one lakh. I would like to raise one more point. You mentioned time constraints; however, I may not always be mindful of the time. In urban areas, an amount of Rs. 2.5 lakh is provided under this scheme, whereas in rural areas, only Rs. 1.38 lakh is provided, even though the cost of cement, steel and labour is the same in both urban and rural areas. When the cost of all essential materials is identical, I would like to

request that the same amount of Rs. 2.5 lakh being provided in urban areas should also be extended to beneficiaries in rural areas under the housing scheme. This is my humble request.

[English]

DR. JAYANTA KUMAR ROY (JALPAIGURI): Speaker Sir, through you I beg to draw the attention of this august House to the crisis which the Rajbanshi speaking people are going through.

Marginalized and fragmented, they are yet to have their own distinct identity to be recognized. They have a glorious folk tradition, which has already been eclipsed to a large extent because of the ups and downs of the cruel history. As a member of the said community, I feel very agonized at it. If that glorious tradition fades into total oblivion, it will be an enormous loss to mother India which is proud of its diversity with a rare kind of unity remaining at the core.

The demand for the recognition of our language is very much there and it will continue to remain. It is really very sad that this recognition is getting delayed mainly because of some undesirable controversies. Things have turned worse with the establishment of two different academies for the same language with two different names.

Meanwhile, our Government should take some measures so that we can protect the Rajbanshi culture and, at the same time, revive what has already been lost. The folk-drama of *Dotoradanga* is already extinct and *Kushan* based on Ramayana which was once immensely popular in North Bengal, is already on the verge of extinction.

Something needs to be done to revive them to their pristine glory. They are, in fact, the storehouses of basic human values without which no society can thrive. I hope our Government will attach due importance to the issue that I raise today and do something concrete as early as possible for the purpose. Thank you, Sir.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Jayant Kumar Roy.

[English]

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to bring to attention of the hon. Minister of Textiles through you that Thiruvananthapuram is well-known for its handloom sector, including the Balaramapuram centre popular for the production of traditional varieties of handloom with a contemporary style. Unfortunately, the

sector has suffered from unviability and lack of financial support, turning many establishments sick in the last few years and causing mass unemployment amongst weavers. The Thiruvananthapuram District Industries Centre has made wonderful efforts to rejuvenate the ailing handloom sector by coordinating hundreds of weaver societies to employ the State's highest number of looms and generate fine cloth required for students under the Kerala Government's free school-uniform distribution plan introduced in 2016. But despite significant handloom employment and good earnings, there is an uncertainty about the availability of young skilled weavers in handloom communities to carry the work forward in future, as most of them have understandably moved out to opt for alternative jobs for better prospects.

I, therefore, urge the Ministry to extend support to ensure sustainability of the revived sector by proposing an effective scheme for young weavers with immediate financial assistance and local benefits to inspire young weavers back to their traditional occupation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV (BULDHANA): Thank you, Speaker Sir.

Sir, in my Parliamentary Constituency of Buldhana in Maharashtra, there is the Lonar Lake, which was formed about 50,000 years ago due to the impact of a meteorite that fell from the sky. This lake was created by the collision of a meteorite weighing approximately ten lakh tonnes. The diameter of this meteoritic crater lake is about 1.8 kilometres, and its depth is nearly 500 metres. Even today, scientists from India and abroad are conducting research on the water of this lake. The antiquity of this lake can be understood from the fact that it finds mention in ancient texts such as the Skanda Purana, the Padma Purana and the Ain-i-Akbari. Lonar Lake was accorded 'A-grade' tourist centre status by the Central Government about twenty years ago. However, no financial assistance has been provided by the Central Government for its development. Through this Zero Hour, I would like to request the concerned Ministers, through you, Sir, that as a large number of domestic and foreign tourists visit Lonar Lake, proper arrangements should be made for their access and transportation. The roads leading to the site should be improved, and adequate accommodation facilities should be developed for visitors. Further, Lonar Lake does not find mention in the 'Dekho Apna Desh' tourism programme. If Lonar Lake is included in this programme, it would attract more international tourists to our country and enable

them to visit and appreciate this unique natural heritage site. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: Dr. G. Ranjit Reddy - Not present.

Shri Rajesh Verma.

SHRI RAJESH VERMA (SITAPUR): Hon. Speaker Sir, I am deeply grateful to you for giving me this opportunity. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Sharda River in my Parliamentary Constituency. The Sharda River flows along the boundary between Lakhimpur and Sitapur districts. While an embankment has been constructed along the river within the limits of Lakhimpur district, no such embankment has been constructed on the Sitapur side. As a result, whenever the river floods, large-scale inundation and erosion occur in my Parliamentary Constituency. Further, I would like to submit that if an embankment is constructed on this side as well, a substantial portion of the Parliamentary Constituencies of Sitapur and Dhaurahra would benefit from it. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to ensure that, just as an embankment has been constructed along the river within the Lakhimpur boundary, a similar embankment is constructed along the Sitapur boundary, so that our region can be protected from recurring floods.

HON. SPEAKER: Shrimati Rekha Verma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Rajesh Verma.

SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA (TONK-SAWAI MADHOPUR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, in Rajasthan, the Gujjar community was granted five percent reservation under the Most Backward Classes category, which included five castes. This reservation was achieved after a prolonged and difficult struggle, during which 72 persons lost their lives. The movement witnessed participation and sacrifice not only from Rajasthan but from the Gujjar community across the country. Therefore, this issue is not merely a State matter, but one that concerns the dignity and honour of the Gujjar community nationwide. However, vide letter No. 16787-802 dated 1/11/2019, the Government of Rajasthan has initiated a survey to include ten castes belonging to the Muslim community, such as Marasi, Manganiyar and Langa, in the MBC category. Pursuant to this, the concerned Commission has directed all District Collectors in the State to conduct surveys. In this process, the Panchayat Samiti of Weir in Bharatpur district has even been issued a show-cause notice for alleged delay in conducting the survey. Through you, Sir, I would like to urge the Union Government to include the MBC category in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution and to issue clear directions to the State Government that no alteration or dilution of this reservation be

undertaken. Failure to do so may lead to serious resentment and unrest, not only in Rajasthan but among the Gujjar community across the country. There should be no circumstances that compel the Gujjar community to launch another agitation. Further, Sir, the Rajasthan Government has also renamed the Dev Narayan Scooty Scheme as the Kali Devi Bhil Scheme. Under this scheme, girl students were provided scooters. The budget of this Board was approximately Rs. 5 crore. However, the allocation under this scheme has now been reduced, and scooters are no longer being provided to girl students. Through you, I would like to request that the Union Government issue appropriate directions to the State Government in this matter.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Malook Nagar is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria.

SHRI NISHITH PRAMANIK (COOCHBEHAR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, at times certain incidents occur which do not allow us to remain silent. A few days ago, in my Parliamentary Constituency of Coochbehar, a BSF jawan who had dedicated his life to the service of the nation was brutally assaulted by cattle smugglers. Prior to this, on 20 August 2019, another brave BSF jawan, a son of Mother India, had to lay down his life.

[English]

*Hon'ble Speaker Sir, this is not only the issue of Cooch Behar district or North Bengal. In almost all the districts adjoining Bangladesh, such incidents are rampant and a gang is operating under the auspices of the aunt-nephew government. The police and administration are hand-in-glove with the anti-social elements sponsored by the government. Illegal activities are carried out by the goons. We worship cows. But cows are being smuggled into Bangladesh illegally. Those pious souls, who have sacrificed their lives for the country, who have devoted their lives to the development of the nation – we are losing them untimely. Those who are whole-heartedly devoted to the safety and security of India, who put their own lives at stake, are being killed by the goons of the Trinamool Congress and the police administration. Thus I request you to take appropriate measures in this regard. ...(*Interruptions*)

SUSHRI MAHUA MOITRA (KRISHNANAGAR): Sir, this is not allowed. ...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI NISHITH PRAMANIK: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to urge that suitable and effective arrangements be made in this regard.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali

[English]

DR. M.K. VISHNU PRASAD (ARANI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, it is everybody's dream to build a house. It is happening and it happened in the name of Indira Awas Yojana during the Congress period and later, it became Prime Minister Awas Yojana. This PMAY is doing extremely well, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, in the rural areas, but in the urban areas, it is being done in the name of Housing for All Scheme. Anticipating that the funds will come from the Government, several people, who migrated from the rural area to the urban area, have constructed the houses on their own. But till now the funds have not been released under this scheme for the people who live in the urban areas, especially in the municipalities and major panchayats. So, I request the Union Government to allot funds from the Ministry of Finance as well as from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to the people living in the urban areas who have already built houses anticipating that the funds will come from the Government. As it is, they have taken loans and they are paying the interest by taking another loan. As you know, owning a home is a dream of everybody. But in Tamil Nadu this scheme is not functional for the past two years. So, I request, through you, the Government to allot funds for the 'Housing for All' scheme in the urban areas. Thank you.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad.

SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR SINGH (ARARIA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for granting me the opportunity to raise a matter of public importance. My Parliamentary Constituency of Araria lies along the borders of Nepal and West Bengal. The region is repeatedly affected by floods. Heavy rainfall in Nepal leads to severe flooding in our area, resulting in large-scale destruction of agricultural crops and causing loss of life and property. This year alone, 15 people have lost their lives due to floods. Such floods occur every year. Although the Government undertakes the construction of roads and bridges, these are frequently washed away when floods strike. This recurring problem continues to inflict immense hardship on the people of my constituency.

Sir, through you, I would like to make a request to the Hon. Minister of Jal Shakti. This is an agrarian country, and the livelihood of a large section of our population depends on agriculture. In the year 2013, the Mahananda Basin Project was initiated in our region. Several rivers flow through this area, including the Bakra, Perman, Nuna, Kankai, Sursar and Bhulwa. Under the Mahananda Basin Project, it was envisaged that embankments along all these rivers would be constructed in four phases. However, so far, only one phase has been completed. If all

four phases are completed and embankments are constructed along these rivers, it would significantly benefit farmers in the region. At the same time, the developmental works undertaken by the Government, such as roads and bridges, would remain protected, and the recurring loss of life and property due to floods could be prevented. herefore urge the Government to take prompt and effective steps to complete the remaining phases of the Mahananda Basin Project at the earliest.

Through you, I would like to request that the work undertaken under the first phase of the Mahananda Basin Project in the year 2013 be followed up by the completion of the second, third and fourth phases at the earliest. With Shri Narendra Modi ji as Prime Minister, we believe that this is possible. We have great expectations from the Government. Our Hon. Prime Minister is committed to development in every sector. Adequate funds should be allocated without delay, and embankments should be constructed along all the rivers so that areas such as Araria, Purnea, Shitalganj and Katihar can be protected from floods.

SHRI ANUMULA REVANTH REDDY (MALKAJGIRI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, this issue pertains to the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard in the Malkajgiri Lok Sabha Constituency of Telangana. The Jawahar Nagar dumping yard was established about twenty years ago over an area of 350 acres, at a time when it was located outside

the city of Hyderabad. Over the past twenty years, Hyderabad has expanded and has now reached Jawahar Nagar. As a result, waste generated by nearly 50 lakh people of Hyderabad is being dumped at the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard. In the year 2017, the National Green Tribunal directed the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation to establish small dumping yards across different parts of the city. However, this has not been implemented so far. Therefore, I would like to request the Hon. Minister for Environment to review this matter. Despite the directions of the National Green Tribunal, the GHMC has failed to establish smaller dumping yards. As a consequence, 14 lakes have been polluted, groundwater has been contaminated, carcasses of animals killed in road accidents are also being dumped at the site, and during the monsoon, runoff water from the dumping yard flows into nearby lakes, causing further degradation. Therefore, I would like to request that the Hon. Minister of Environment be directed to review this matter and ensure compliance with the directions of the National Green Tribunal.

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR (BIJNOR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, my Lok Sabha Constituency of Bijnor is somewhat unique, as it falls under three different Commissionerates and three districts. Therefore, I am compelled to raise issues relating to all three districts.

HON. SPEAKER: However, you will not be given any extra time to speak.

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: Sir, in Meerut district, the road from Mawana to Bhadrakali is in a very poor condition and is extremely narrow. Lakhs of people use this road for daily commuting. Therefore, this road needs to be widened and repaired. In Bijnor district, the road from Chandpur to Bastha also requires widening and repair. Hastinapur is a place of great historical importance. A bridge over the River Ganga is under construction there, but the work keeps stopping and restarting intermittently. If this bridge is completed at the earliest, it will significantly reduce travel distance, ease traffic congestion and lead to savings in fuel consumption, benefiting lakhs of people. In Muzaffarnagar district, the Sikraida-Rajwahe embankment road also requires widening and repair. This will benefit lakhs of farmers in the region. Therefore, I would like to request that the public interest works in the districts of Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor, which will benefit lakhs of people, be taken up and completed at the earliest.

[English]

SHRI BENNY BEHANAN (CHALAKUDY): Thank you, Speaker Sir. I would like to draw the attention of the House and the Government through you to the unfortunate incident of the

withdrawal of the private insurance companies from the crop insurance sector despite making reasonable profits. Sir, the reason cited is the loss due to 100 per cent insurance payouts due to flood and other natural calamities during the year.

This is an unfortunate decision as they have defeated the very purpose of the crop insurance supporting the weakest of the population, the rural poor farmers who are left with no means to fund for themselves. The companies have done so when, according to the annual report of Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India, Rs. 11,905 crore was collected by 11 private sector insurers as premium. But they faced insurance claim of only Rs. 8,831 crore, clocking a profit of roughly Rs. 3,000 crore. In the same financial year, the State-owned insurers incurred a loss of Rs. 4,805 crore. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its report has been pointing out the same issue of this sector. So, a mechanism has to be developed to compensate the farmers in the event of loss due to any reason – crop failure, due to bad weather events, pests or any other reason and, more so, due to adverse market conditions. All this would need Government's will and a vision to ensure the income and employment security.

Sir, I strongly suggest that the Government must urgently intervene to ensure that the farmers are, in no way, affected by the

mechanism of the insurance companies who are out to reek in profit and make the farmers suffer.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Benny Behanan.

SHRI MAHABALI SINGH (KARAKAT): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise an important matter of my Parliamentary Constituency in this House.

HON. SPEAKER: I always give you an opportunity.

SHRI MAHABALI SINGH: Hon. Speaker, Sir, in the year 1962, the Indrapuri Barrage was constructed on the Son River in Bihar. As a result of the construction of this barrage, irrigation facilities were provided to lakhs of acres of land across eight districts of South Bihar, namely Aurangabad, Rohtas, Kaimur, Buxar, Bhojpur, Arwal, Jehanabad and Patna. However, nearly 55 years have passed, and the barrage has still not been properly desilted. Due to recurrent floods in the Son River, large quantities of hill soil and silt have accumulated, causing the barrage to become heavily silted. As a result, its water storage capacity has been severely reduced. Therefore, through you, I would like to urge the Ministry of Jal Shakti to undertake desilting and cleaning of the accumulated soil and silt in the barrage, so that relief can be provided to the people

of the eight districts of South Bihar, who frequently face drought-like conditions.

HON. SPEAKER: These are the true representatives of Bihar. Shri Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Mahabali Singh.

Shri Girish Bhalchandra Bapat - Not Present.

[English]

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA (GUNTUR): Thank you, Sir. There is a serious concern over the violation of privacy in the recent Hyderabad rape case. We all agree that what happened in Hyderabad last Wednesday night was a brutal and uncivilised act. We have also agreed that a strong and immediate message needs to be sent out by the police and the Government that this type of incidents against our women will not be tolerated and that justice should be swift, severe and immediate. But, today, Sir, I would like to focus on what happened after the incident and what was reported in the Media. I would like to bring to the notice of everyone here, through you, that the right to privacy of the victim and the family was blatantly violated in this case. You may recall that during the Nirbhaya case, privacy was maintained as far as the identity of the victim and that of her family was concerned, which was very commendable. But that has not been maintained this time. The

photograph of the victim is being shown and the name of the victim is being revealed. I urge the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting to take the necessary action to avoid similar incidents in the future. At the end of the day, the privacy and dignity of the victim and the family are paramount and should never be compromised.

SHRI M. SELVARAJ (NAGAPATTINAM): Hon. Member, Shri Baalu had already raised the issue of tragic incident in Sudan. In my constituency, one Ramakrishnan, son of Shri Ramalingam lost his life in the said tragic incident. He lived in the Nagapattinam Taluk and the Thirumurugan Panchayat Union. He was from a very poor family. He is the breadwinner of his family. Hence, I urge upon the Union Ministry to take necessary action for bringing his body back and hand over the same to his family. I would also request the Government to provide compensation of at least Rs.25 lakh to his family.

DR. K. JAYAKUMAR (TIRUVALLUR): Hon. Sir, thank you for the opportunity. In Coimbatore district, in a place called Mettupalayam, 17 people died in a wall collapse due to heavy rains. This wall of stone was constructed at a height of 20 feet. It is a very dangerous wall over there. It was constructed for the purpose of dividing the people. On the one side, the Scheduled Castes people were living. The people who died due to the collapse of wall were

all from the Scheduled Castes families. This is actually called an 'untouchability wall'. Despite protesting, no compensation has been paid by the person who has built the wall. I do not think any police action has been taken. On the other hand, police action is being taken against those families who were sleeping over there, and who protested against the collapse of the wall. I would request you, the hon. Speaker, to kindly advise the Tamil Nadu Government and its police force to take necessary action and to provide adequate compensation for these poor people living there. I would also request the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes to kindly send a team to investigate the case.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I would like to request you to conclude your remarks within one minute. Only those Hon. Members who can finish within one minute may rise to speak. Those requiring more time may wait until next week to raise their matters.

DR. ARVIND KUMAR SHARMA (ROHTAK): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I am extremely grateful to you for giving me this opportunity. Sir, like the rest of the world, our country is also moving towards Digital India. For this, I would like to sincerely thank the Hon. Prime Minister, whose efforts have enabled the country to progress

in this direction. However, a serious problem has emerged in the form of large-scale fraud in digital banking. Through various applications such as Paytm, ATM-related services, PhonePe, Google Pay, IMPS, NEFT, RTGS and under the pretext of updating KYC details, fraud is being committed on a daily basis against poor and middle-class citizens. The persons involved in such fraud operate in such a manner that victims are not even given sufficient time to delete the application through which money is being siphoned off. The scale of this fraud is alarming. When victims approach the police, there is virtually no response or action. The Hon. Minister was present here earlier but has since left. Sir, if official records are examined, the magnitude of fraud affecting citizens will become evident. I request that records of the past six months be reviewed to see how people are being defrauded and yet no effective action is being taken. In many cases, even FIRs are not registered. I would like to cite an example from just two days ago. An elderly woman was cheated, and when she contacted the police, she was merely advised to block the number. Sir, this is a very serious matter. Digital India is a vision of the Hon. Prime Minister, but the manner in which people are being looted through digital fraud is deeply concerning. Therefore, I request you to kindly direct the Government to take this issue seriously and ensure effective remedial action. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, please confine yourself to one minute. With regard to the issue raised by Dr. Arvind Kumar Sharma, I would like to request that guidelines should be issued to the States. Similar incidents have occurred involving many people in several countries. The State Police should prepare and implement an action plan to address this matter.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRIMATI MALA ROY (KOLKATA DAKSHIN): Sir, Cyclone Bulbul has recently caused severe destruction in West Bengal. The Cyclone has affected the lives of lakhs of people in East Medinipur and North and South 24 Parganas. Over 14 lakh hectares of agricultural land has been destroyed. More than five lakh houses and six thousand electric poles have been damaged. Many people have been injured and some have also lost their lives. The total loss incurred by the State Government so far is nearly Rs. 24,000 crore which is expected to rise to nearly Rs. 50,000 crore. A detailed estimate was given to the team sent by the Central Government which had visited the affected districts to assess the extent of the impact. However, no assistance has been given from the Centre yet despite the assurance given by the hon. Prime Minister. The funds of the State Government are being used to

provide relief and rehabilitation. Six lakh kids have been trained with the help of civic volunteers and self-help groups to help distressed families. We request the Central Government to release the funds at the earliest to protect the lives and livelihood of our people.

[Translation]

SHRI VINAYAK BHAURAO RAUT (RATNAGIRI-SINDHUDURG): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. Sir, BSNL is a Government of India undertaking and serves as a vital instrument for delivering Government schemes and services to the people. However, it is unfortunate that in Maharashtra, BSNL has been pushed into a state of severe crisis over the past week. I would like to inform the House that, over the last two days, nearly 1,000 BSNL BTS towers in Maharashtra have been shut down due to non-payment of electricity dues. Following the shutdown of these towers, BSNL services have virtually come to a halt. As a result, the public is facing immense hardship. Connectivity has been severely disrupted, and even Government welfare schemes are not reaching the intended beneficiaries. Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to request you to intervene in this matter by calling upon the Hon. Minister of Telecommunications and the Finance Director of BSNL to urgently deliberate and arrive at a viable solution. Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to request that

immediate steps be taken to provide relief not only to the people of Maharashtra but also to citizens across the country who depend on BSNL services.

[English]

SHRIMATI MEENAKASHI LEKHI (NEW DELHI): Sir, I stand here before this House to raise an issue of great importance in Kerala which is promoted as number one State in the country. The results and the facts are completely contrary. A picture of Madhu, a tribal, who was beaten to death for stealing rice to satisfy his hunger last year itself freshens my mind and, recently, a mother called Sridevi along with her six children, was found eating mud because there was no food available and that happened in Thiruvananthapuram, the State's Capital. Now, the fact is that when the State volunteers appeared and watched their pitiable condition, they removed the children from their mother for institutional care. Now, removing children from the mother is not an answer to this problem. The problem is that the Adivasis, Dalits and the poor of the State are suffering, while Communist Party leaders are enjoying themselves travelling around the world with their families, but people are not cared for. Under these circumstances, I want the intervention of this House and the Central Government so that the mother and the children are brought together and they are able to be looked after.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Meenakashi Lekhi.

SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA (UJJAIN): Hon. Speaker, I thank you very much.

HON. SPEAKER: Please come over here.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Please come a little closer. There is no difficulty. I am permitting you.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANIL FIROZIYA: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I had already come forward. I thought that if I gained some weight, I would stand out separately, but now I seem to have become a victim of obstruction. I had thought that I would be distinctly visible, but now that I have become a victim of obstruction, kindly resolve my difficulty. *...(Interruptions)* Hon. Speaker, Sir, I sincerely thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Through you, I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister that under the Right to Education Act, private schools were directed by the Government to provide free admission to children belonging to economically weaker sections and to ensure their education up to Class VIII. In return,

the Government makes payments to private school managements in instalments, calculated on a per-student basis. Sir, in the initial years of this significant scheme of the Government, many children from poor families received the opportunity to study in well-known and reputed schools across the country.

Had this Government scheme not been in place, the aspiration of children from economically weaker families to study in private schools would never have been realised. The exorbitant monthly fees charged by many private schools exceed the annual income of several poor families. However, after completing education up to Class VIII under this scheme, many students are being compelled to discontinue their schooling upon reaching Class IX. This is because they fall outside the purview of the Right to Education Act, and private schools thereafter begin charging fees as per their prescribed norms. Consequently, the education of many meritorious students is at risk of being abruptly disrupted. Therefore, through you, I would like to request that provision be made, either by extending the existing scheme or by introducing an alternative mechanism, to ensure free education for such students up to Class XII. This will help secure their future and enable them to realise their full potential.

SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL (MIRZAPUR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, for some time now, reports have been consistently emerging

from States such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh indicating that candidates belonging to reserved categories are being selected only after securing higher cut-off marks than candidates from the General category. Recently, in the recruitment of Homeopathy Medical Officers in Uttar Pradesh, the cut-off for the General category was 86 percent, whereas for the OBC category it was as high as 99 percent. In the Rajasthan Administrative Service Examination, 2013, the cut-off for the OBC category was 381, while that for the General category was 350. In the merit list prepared for the post of Sub-Inspector in the Railway Protection Force, the cut-off for the OBC category stood at 95.53 percent, whereas the cut-off for the General category was 94.59 percent. Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, in the examination for the post of Taxation Assistant, the cut-off for the OBC category was higher than that of the General category. In the recruitment of teachers under the Delhi Government, the cut-off for SC candidates was 85.45 percent, while the cut-off for the General category was significantly lower at 80.96 percent.

Sir, as per the statutory position, if a candidate belonging to a reserved category secures marks higher than those obtained by a General category candidate, such a candidate is required to be appointed against a General category seat and not against a reserved seat. However, this principle is not being implemented in practice.

The Hon. Supreme Court has laid down a condition that a reserved category candidate may be adjusted against a General category seat only if no relaxation, such as in age limit or examination fee, has been availed of. However, candidates belonging to OBC and SC communities are socially and economically disadvantaged, and in most cases they are compelled to avail themselves of such statutory relaxations. In this context, through you, I would like to urge the Government to ensure genuine equality of opportunity by formulating a clear and uniform policy whereby, in all circumstances, candidates belonging to reserved categories who secure marks equal to or higher than those of General category candidates are appointed against General category seats. This will ensure fairness, transparency and justice in the recruitment process. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: Shrimati Rekha Verma and Shri Devaji Patel are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Anupriya Patel.

SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI (MATHURA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Prime Minister and the Government to a matter of great importance relating to my Parliamentary Constituency. In Govardhan, which falls within my constituency, is the sacred Giriraj Parvat. Numerous sites associated with the life of Lord Shri Krishna are located in this

region. However, the most significant among them, which continues to exist even today, is Giriraj Parvat itself and the sacred Braj Bhoomi. Devotees undertake a 21-kilometre parikrama of Govardhan, and pilgrims from across the world come to perform this sacred circumambulation. It is estimated that nearly five to ten crore devotees visit this holy place. The parikrama of Govardhan holds immense religious significance, as Lord Shri Krishna lifted Govardhan Parvat with the little finger of His left hand to protect the people of Braj from the fury of Indra. Today, I seek the Government's intervention for the protection, preservation and development of this sacred site. Several Governments have come and gone, but no meaningful steps have been taken so far. I have strong faith that the present Government will certainly take concrete action in this regard. Many years ago, this place was extremely serene and beautiful, but the present environment does not reflect that legacy. While it may not be possible to fully restore the past, it is imperative that adequate facilities are provided for the large number of devotees who visit Govardhan and undertake the parikrama. There should be properly maintained toilet facilities along the parikrama route. Effective waste management must be ensured so that the area remains clean and free from garbage. Recently, several devotees fell ill after performing achaman at Radha Kund and Kusum Sarovar, which is a matter of serious

concern. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to take immediate and comprehensive steps to ensure cleanliness, safety and basic amenities for pilgrims at Govardhan.

13.00 hrs

I submit that the development of Govardhan should be planned with a long-term perspective, keeping in view the requirements of the next 100 years, and that world-class facilities be provided accordingly. An integrated approach to development is essential. At present, no significant development has been undertaken in the portion of Giriraj Parvat falling within the jurisdiction of the State of Rajasthan. The process of obtaining special permissions from various departments often takes several years, during which time Governments change but no substantive progress is made. Therefore, for the comprehensive and coordinated development of Govardhan, I would like to urge the Union Government to take the initiative. As Govardhan is located across the States of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Union Government may consider constituting a Shri Govardhan Development Trust to oversee and implement development activities. Such an institutional mechanism would enable the planned development of Shri Govardhan ji on lines comparable to major pilgrimage centres such as Tirupati Balaji, Vaishno Devi and the Golden Temple at Amritsar. This would contribute to improved facilities for pilgrims and enhance

India's cultural and spiritual standing internationally.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Shri Gopal Shetty, and Shrimati Rekha Verma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Hema Malini.

SHRI GURJEET SINGH AUJLA (AMRITSAR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that due to issues relating to GST, an amount of Rs. 41 crore for the months of August, September and October is pending from the Union Government. As a result, development works in my constituency are being delayed. I seek to draw your attention, as well as that of the Government, to this matter. Welfare schemes such as old-age pension, disability pension and widow pension are not being disbursed. In addition, salaries have not been paid, and Government dues amounting to Rs. 2,200 crore....(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: That matter has already been raised. You are a little late. It has been taken up.

SHRI DEVAJI PATEL (JALORE): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. In my constituency, a major scam has taken place involving Adarsh Bank, amounting to nearly Rs. 14,000 crore, in which the money of poor people and

farmers is trapped. Hon. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to submit that the owners concerned have been arrested.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Mohammad Sadique.

SHRI DEVAJI PATEL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, please allow me one minute. Small vegetable vendors and farmers have saved money by depriving themselves of basic necessities, and today many of their families are facing acute hardship and even lack food. Meanwhile, those who have amassed great wealth are sitting comfortably, having diverted this money to their relatives. Those relatives should also be arrested, because this entire amount belongs to the public. Through you, I would like to urge the Government to take decisive action. The State Government is unlikely to act, as during the election period it was engaged in protecting those responsible. Therefore, through you, I would like to submit that action must be initiated from here. This is my earnest request. Thank you.

[English]

***SHRI MOHAMMAD SADIQUE (FARIDKOT):**I thank you, Hon'ble Speaker Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak on a matter of urgent importance.

* English Translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

Sir, in my constituency, a project is pending since long. A survey work has been completed for laying of Railway track from Moga to Kotkapura. However, Sir, due to pressure, from Punjab's transport mafia, the previous government of Punjab literally threw the survey report in dustbin and no action was taken. Sir, I urge upon the Hon.ble Railway Minister to kindly look into the matter. He has made promises to many members and given assurances regarding many projects. But, Sir, when I raise a demand, it is not fulfilled. This discrimination should not be done. The survey work for laying of the railway track has already been completed. In 2017, this project was shelved.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, Punjab is a border state.

HON. SPEAKER: Shrimati Sangeeta Azad.

SHRI MOHAMMAD SADIQUE : Sir, you are kind to everyone. Kindly listen to me too, Punjab is a border state. During the struggle for independence, Punjab has been at the forefront. We have provided food grains for the entire country. Our contribution is second to none and the entire country knows this. Under the able stewardship of our Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, Punjab is attaining new heights. So, I urge upon the Hon'ble Railway Minister to complete this project of laying railway track between Moga and Kotkapura so that a train can be started between

the two stations and the people of the area can avail this benefit.

Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SANGEETA AZAD (LALGANJ): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak during Zero Hour. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a serious issue concerning the Madrasa Modernisation Scheme, which has been in operation since 1993-94 under the Centrally Sponsored scheme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Under this scheme, 8,584 covered madrasas in Uttar Pradesh employ about 25,500 teachers. These teachers are diligently discharging their duties and are educating some of the poorest and most backward children of society studying in madrasas, in accordance with the intent of the Government. However, it is with deep regret that I state that these modern teachers have not been receiving the Central share of their honorarium for several years. In particular, hundreds of teachers in Azamgarh district have not received any payment towards salary from the Ministry of Human Resource Development for more than 48 months. As a result, the condition of these teachers has deteriorated from bad to worse.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Sangeeta Azad.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2:00 p.m.

13.06 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Fourteen of the Clock.

14.04 hrs

*The Lok Sabha reassembled at Four Minutes past Fourteen of
the Clock.*

(Shrimati Rama Devi *in the Chair*)

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Members, matters under Rule 377 will be laid on the Table of the House. Those Hon. Members who have been permitted to raise matters under Rule 377 today and who wish to lay them on the Table may do so within 20 minutes.

*Treated as laid on the Table.

(i) Need to strengthen safety measures for women in trains and give preferential treatment to women passengers in railway ticket counters in Mumbai

SHRI GOPAL SHETTY (MUMBAI NORTH): The issue of women's safety is a matter of utmost importance. Over the past few years, the Government has taken several commendable steps to strengthen the safety and security of women, which are welcome. Travel by train has today become a primary mode of transportation for the common people, not only in Mumbai but across the country. It is acknowledged that ensuring the safety of women, particularly during night hours, remains one of the highest priorities of the Government, and work in this direction is being carried out expeditiously. However, there is still a need to introduce more effective and practical measures. Long queues are often witnessed at railway ticket counters, especially during night hours. Therefore, women should be given priority while purchasing tickets during night-time travel. Further, after 9.00 p.m., a separate ticket counter should be opened exclusively for women. In addition, in order to enhance the safety of women passengers, automatic doors should be installed in all local trains operating in Mumbai city, including the Western and Eastern suburban sections. Alongside this, special women-only local trains should also be operated on a priority basis.

I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Railways to take appropriate and necessary steps in this regard, keeping the safety and security of women as a paramount consideration.

(ii) Need to operationalise CGHS dispensary at Silchar, Assam

[English]

DR. RAJDEEP ROY (SILCHAR): 33 Postal dispensaries located at different places of the country merged with CGHS vide Ministry of Health letter no. S-11011/01/2016/CGHS-III dated 25th January 2019 and directed CGHS to start their functioning w.e.f. 1.4.2019. In Assam there were two P&T dispensaries, one at Dibrugarh and other at Silchar and were merged with CGHS. In Dibrugarh, CGHS dispensary started functioning whereas at Silchar, it is yet to start functioning.

**(iii) Need to bestow more powers to Tripura Tribal Area
Autonomous District Council**

[Translation]

SHRI REBATI TRIPURA (TRIPURA EAST): I would like to demand from the Union Government that, in order to grant greater powers to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, a Constitutional Amendment Bill to this effect be introduced in Parliament and, after due discussion, be passed. Further, the number of seats and the budget of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council should also be increased so that the development of the tribal areas of Tripura can take place rapidly at the grassroots level.

**(iv) Need to install bronze statues of freedom fighters in
Shahjahanpur Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI ARUN KUMAR SAGAR (SHAHJAHANPUR): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to my Lok Sabha Constituency of Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, which is renowned as the City of Martyrs. Shahjahanpur is the birthplace of distinguished freedom fighters of the Indian independence movement, namely Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan and Thakur Roshan Singh, who made extraordinary sacrifices and played a crucial role in securing the nation's freedom. In view of the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, I would like to urge the Government to take appropriate measures to honour the memory of these freedom fighters by installing bronze statues in Shahjahanpur, developing a commemorative park, and issuing a series of postage stamps in their honour.

**(v) Need to repair Jaya Prabha Setu road in Maharajganj
Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar**

SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL (MAHARAJGANJ): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to my Parliamentary Constituency of Maharajganj in the Saran district of Bihar. Manjhi, located in this district, is a historic border area reflecting the shared cultural ethos of the people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The sacred River Sarayu (Ghaghara), which flows from Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Shri Ram, passes through this region. Across this river stands the Jai Prabha Setu, named after Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, a leader of India's first and second freedom movements, and his wife Prabhavati ji. The foundation, construction and inauguration of this bridge constitute an important chapter in the nation's history. The bridge was constructed due to the sustained efforts of the late Shri Chandra Shekhar ji, former Prime Minister of India. At present, the Jai Prabha Setu is in an extremely dilapidated condition. It serves as a vital lifeline connecting Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. For the past five years, the road surface of the bridge has been severely damaged. The railings have remained broken for months, there are numerous potholes on the roadway, and the structural rings connecting the pillars have deteriorated significantly. As a result, accidents occur frequently,

leading to serious injuries and loss of life. As per available information, approximately 24 persons have lost their lives in accidents on this bridge during the past one year alone. In the larger public interest, I would like to urge the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, to take immediate and necessary steps to undertake urgent repairs of this highly important and historic road bridge. Since this stretch of NH-31 falls under the jurisdiction of the National Highways Authority of India, expeditious remedial action is urgently required.

**(vi) Need to provide life insurance cover to farmers under
Kisan Credit Card Scheme**

SHRI DHARAMBIR SINGH (BHIWANI-MAHENDRAGARH): I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India to the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme. While the Crop Insurance Scheme has been implemented across the country, the Kisan Credit Card remains an extremely important instrument for farmers, as it enables them to access institutional credit through banks. I would like to submit that, at the time of issuing a Kisan Credit Card, life insurance coverage should also be provided to the farmer as an integral part of the scheme. While one hopes that no unfortunate incident occurs, in the event of an accident resulting in the death of a farmer, the insurance amount would provide crucial financial support to the bereaved family, particularly in meeting the liability arising out of the Kisan Credit Card loan. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to consider making life insurance mandatory at the time of issuance of the Kisan Credit Card and to issue appropriate directions to banks in this regard. Such a measure would greatly benefit farmers and their families.

(vii) Regarding promotion of Sanskrit language in the country

SHRIMATI REKHA ARUN VERMA (DHAURAHRA): I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact that the Sanskrit language, written in the Devanagari script, is today facing a serious decline in our country. I would like to urge the Hon. Minister to issue directions to the concerned departments to establish at least one Sanskrit school in every district and State for the promotion and preservation of this ancient language. Further, I would like to know what steps are being taken by the Ministry to improve the condition of those Sanskrit schools which are already functioning. In my Parliamentary Constituency of Dhaurahra in Uttar Pradesh, there are seven Sanskrit schools, all of which are in a very poor condition. Although students are willing to pursue education in these institutions, there is a severe shortage of teachers. Due to the lack of teaching and non-teaching staff, even basic administration and maintenance of these schools is not being carried out properly. I would like to request the Hon. Minister to take this issue seriously and initiate appropriate action so that the Sanskrit language is accorded due importance, dignity and institutional support.

(viii) Need to provide water to Bharatpur Parliamentary Constituency, Rajasthan for drinking and irrigation purposes as per Yamuna pact.

SHRIMATI RANJEETA KOLI (BHARATPUR): Through Rule 377, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government that Bharatpur district in my Parliamentary Constituency is a drought-prone area where rainfall is inadequate. As a result, farmers do not receive sufficient water for irrigation, and during the summer months, the common public faces acute difficulties in accessing drinking water. In order to meet the water requirements of this region, the Yamuna Water Agreement was entered into in the year 1994. Under this agreement, Rajasthan was entitled to 41.86 percent of the allocated water, and Bharatpur district was to receive an average share of 15 Percent, amounting to approximately 1,281 cusecs. However, this allocation has not been realised in practice. Nearly 70 percent of the Gurgaon Canal passes through Haryana before entering Bharatpur district, and it is a matter of concern that my constituency consistently receives less water than its entitled share. Further, in the year 2012, a proposal for the second phase of the Gurgaon Canal was submitted to the Central Water Commission. This proposal has remained pending for the past seven years. The second phase was intended to provide irrigation benefits to 207 villages in the most

backward and irrigation-deficient areas of Deeg, Kumher and Bharatpur. However, due to non-approval of this phase, these areas have been deprived of the intended benefits. Objections to the second phase have been raised by the Government of Haryana. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to resolve the objections raised by Haryana at the Central level and accord approval to the Gurgaon Canal Phase II at the earliest. I also request that the Yamuna Water Agreement be reviewed at the Central level to ensure that Bharatpur district receives its rightful share of water in accordance with the agreement. I would like to request that the benefits due to my Parliamentary Constituency under the Yamuna Water Agreement be ensured without delay and that the Gurgaon Canal Phase II be approved expeditiously.

**(ix) Need to review the location of proposed bye-pass
connecting NH96 to NH231 in Pratapgarh Parliamentary
Constituency, Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI SANGAM LAL GUPTA (PRATAPGARH): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the proposed bypass in my Lok Sabha Constituency of Pratapgarh, which is intended to connect NH-96 with NH-231. The bypass is proposed to pass through village Gonde and join at Mohanganj market. However, under the earlier State Government, the Trauma Centre falling within the survey alignment was included in the bypass layout, and no flyover was proposed at the major crossing on the Pratapgarh-Sandwa Chandika road located opposite the Trauma Centre. As a result, with the Medical College presently under construction in the vicinity becoming operational in the future, heavy traffic movement at this location is likely to negate the very purpose of the bypass. Therefore, I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Road Transport and Highways to kindly consider revising the layout of the proposed bypass between NH-96 and NH-231 in Pratapgarh district by incorporating a small flyover at the road crossing near the Trauma Centre situated in village Pure Keshav Rai. Such a provision would help prevent traffic congestion at the crossing and also safeguard the already constructed Trauma Centre. I would like

to urge that approval be accorded to this revised plan in the interest of public convenience and efficient traffic management.

**(x) Need to establish a Kendriya Vidyalaya in Morbi in Rajkot
Parliamentary Constituency, Gujarat**

[English]

SHRI MOHANBHAI KUNDARIYA (RAJKOT): There is a need to set up a Kendriya Vidyalaya in Morbi in Rajkot parliamentary constituency, Gujarat.

(xi) Regarding problems of contract workers

SHRIMATI MEENAKASHI LEKHI (NEW DELHI): Surveys by different organizations have found that workers are exploited in factories and industries. The minimum wage rate is not followed in such factories, the contractors and employers cut down wages/salaries, make them work for longer hours, pregnant ladies are terminated from their jobs, harassment of workers through unpaid overtime and incidence of child labour is also found. According to a Literature Review Report by International Labour Organization, 2017 the contract workers are frequently terminated without any formal process, lack of proper structured contracts and proof of employment, underpayment and delayed payment of wages and absence of social security measures. The problem of underpayment was found in 82% of the enterprises covered. Hence, I urge the Government to consider this as an issue of utmost priority.

(xii) Need to run link express train from Khajuraho to Delhi

DR. VIRENDRA KUMAR (TIKAMGARH): At present, the Link Express from Khajuraho departs at 18.20 hours and connects with the Uttar Pradesh Sampark Kranti Express at Mahoba (Uttar Pradesh) at 19.35 hours. On the return journey from Delhi, this Link Express is detached from the Sampark Kranti Express at Mahoba at 05.25 hours and reaches Khajuraho at 06.35 hours, after which it remains idle at Khajuraho for the entire day. I would like to submit that this Link Express may be originated from Khajuraho and operated via Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh and Lalitpur, and thereafter linked with the Uttar Pradesh Sampark Kranti Express at Jhansi Railway Station. This will provide direct rail connectivity to Delhi for both district headquarters of my Parliamentary Constituency, namely Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur. Such an arrangement would substantially improve passenger convenience, facilitate smoother travel for rail users, enhance railway utilisation and increase revenue for the Railways, as well as for the State Government and the Union Government.

(xiii) Need to ban sale of junk food in school premises

SHRI KAPIL MORESHWAR PATIL (BHIWANDI): Children constitute the most valuable human resource of the nation, as they represent the country's future and are being shaped within the education system. The quality of care and nourishment provided to them today will determine the strength of the nation tomorrow. Accordingly, ensuring the healthy physical and mental development of children must be accorded the highest priority. It is a matter of serious concern that in a large number of schools across the country, children are increasingly consuming junk food in place of nutritious meals. Food items such as pastries, pizzas and burgers are readily available within school premises. The regular consumption of such food has led not only to a rise in childhood obesity but also to the early onset of various health disorders. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to consider prohibiting the sale and consumption of junk food within school premises nationwide and to promote the availability of healthy and nutritious food for schoolchildren.

(xiv) Regarding setting up of National Investment and Manufacturing Zone in Palakkad district of Kerala

[English]

KUMARI RAMYA HARIDAS (ALATHUR): It was decided by the Government to acquire 470 acres of land at Kallingalpadam, Pathalampadam, Marygiri, Valluvechapara in Kannabra Village at Alathur Taluk in Palakkad District, Kerala for National Investment and Manufacturing Zone under Coimbatore — Kochi Industrial Corridor, and a sum of Rs. 2,000 crore was also allocated for this purpose. A Gazette notification had been issued in the month of July 2017 for acquiring around 320 acres of land at said places. A study report on Sun heat was also done and the report is with the Government. However, after all these developments, no further action has been taken in this regard. Therefore, I urge upon the government to speed up acquisition of land, fix and give one time compensation to land owners as per 2013 Act, land acquisition to be done without classification and rehabilitate the land owners whose land will be acquired for the said industrial corridor.

**(xv) Need to establish Eklavya Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalaya in
each block of Bastar Parliamentary Constituency,
Chhatisgarh**

[Translation]

SHRI DEEPAK BAIJ (BASTAR): The Bastar Parliamentary Constituency of Chhattisgarh is a Naxal-affected and predominantly tribal region, comprising seven districts and thirty-two blocks. Due to its socio-economic and geographical conditions, the region remains considerably backward in the field of education. The Eklavya Model Residential Schools being implemented by the Union Government in tribal-dominated and backward areas have emerged as an effective means of providing quality education to Scheduled Tribe students. At present, such schools are operational in only 13 blocks of the Bastar Parliamentary Constituency. Consequently, children residing in the remaining 19 blocks are deprived of the benefits of this scheme. Therefore, I would like to urge the Union Government to establish Eklavya Model Residential Schools at the earliest in the remaining 19 blocks of the Naxal-affected Bastar Parliamentary Constituency, so that children from this tribal-dominated region may gain access to quality residential education.

(xvi) Need to resolve the long pending issue of patta land of farmers in Kallakurichi Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI GAUTHAM SIGAMANI PON (KALLAKURICHI):

There is a need to resolve the long pending matter relating to allocating Patta Land to Kalvarayan Hills farmers in Kallakunichi Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu.

**(xvii) Regarding manufacturing and marketing of fertilizers
and allied products by KRIBHCO**

SHRI POCHA BRAHMANANDA REDDY (NANDYAL): The main important objectives of KRIBHCO are to promote economic interest of its members by undertaking manufacture and marketing of fertilizers and allied products with maximum efficiency apart from strengthening co-operatives. However, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, KRIBHCO has allotted more than 80 percent of production to private dealers. When other cooperatives like IFFCO are allotting 100 percent of their production to co-operatives then why is KRIBHCO deviating from their aim? In this regard, I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers to take strict action against KRIBHCO.

**(xviii) Regarding construction of bridges in Nellore district,
Andhra Pradesh**

SHRI BALLI DURGA PRASAD RAO (TIRUPATI): 5 years back two bridges near Adishankara Engineering College in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh were sanctioned but these two bridges have not yet been completed so far. It is surprising that Toll is being collected from people for the last five years. There are three toll plazas on NH-5 at Venkatachalam, Bhudanam and near Kotapolu in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh. What is the distance between the above-mentioned toll plazas? I would also like to know the standard distance between two toll plazas and the NHAI guidelines in this regard.

(xix) Need to make Chandkhali Halt Station on Sealdah-Canning railway line in West Bengal functional

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL (JAYNAGAR): Chandkhali halt station falls between Taldi and Canning stations on Sealdah-Canning line. But despite having a halt station, it is dysfunctional because construction of platform is still incomplete on one side, hence causing inconvenience to the villagers, students and passengers. I have been trying for the past 5 years to get it constructed but in vain. All my requests to former Minister of Railways and present Minister of Railways have been fruitless. Thus, I sincerely request the Minister of Railways to make the Chandkhali Halt station functional at the earliest.

**(xx) Regarding proposed inland water transport project
between Thane, Kalyan and Vasai**

DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE (KALYAN): The 50 KM long proposed inland water transport project between Thane, Kalyan and Vasai is a very crucial project for my Kalyan constituency. My constituency depends either on railways or on roads to commute to the other parts of Mumbai, Thane and its suburbs. With increased urbanization and rising pollution levels; need for an alternative mode of transport has always been felt, however, any concrete effort was not made earlier in this regard. So when the former Shipping Minister sanctioned Rs. 650 Crores for the first phase of this waterways Project; it was greatly welcomed by all. We have had several rounds of consultations in the matter, the DPR was approved; and this project was due to be started in the month of March itself. Even a Bhoomi-Pujan Ceremony was also planned; however, due to Lok Sabha elections around the corner, it couldn't be organized by the preceding government. So, after formation of the new government, we again apprised our new MOS about the matter. An assurance to clear the budget for pre-investment activity was given by the Hon'ble MOS in June this year itself and the Hon'ble MOS had advised officials to start work on the first phase in the next three months. The Thane Municipal

Corporation had proposed this water transport project in two phases. Phase 1 was to connect Vasai-Thane-Kalyan while Phase 2 was to connect Thane-Navi Mumbai. In fact, the DPR of the second phase was to be completed by October or November this year however; work on the 1st phase itself hasn't been initiated as yet. Hence; I request the Hon'ble Minister to kindly expedite work on this project.

(xxi) Regarding downgrading of Tiruvarur Sorting office

SHRI M. SELVARAJ (NAGAPATTINAM): Tiruvarur Sorting has been serving 2 districts of Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam under my constituency. As an all India measure, the Ministry of Telecommunications already implemented PNOP and MNOP systems. in the Department of Posts. According to these new systems, the speed and Parcel articles booked at Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam RMS meant for Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam are sent to Mayiladuthurai RMS for processing and again sent to Tiruvarur for further delivery. It creates unnecessary delay in the delivery process. Because of this my constituency people suffer a lot. Sometimes for a local delivery itself, it takes two days.

On the other hand, it has come to notice that the divisional administration of RMS Trichy, planned to downgrade the Tiruvarur Sorting office by reducing the staff strength and working hours. Now staff is working during nights to deliver the letters, parcels and speed posts to the customers. But the divisional administration planned to make it as a Day Set. This will create unnecessary delay in the delivery of all the letters to the public. Earlier the processed parcels and speed articles from Mayiladuthurai RMS came by midnight. But nowadays they are-sent in the early morning only,

this also creates one day delay in the delivery of letters.I urge the Government to take remedial steps in this regard.

**(xxii) Regarding peace talks of ULFA and other outfits with
Government of India**

[Translation]

SHRI NABA KUMAR SARANIA (KOKRAJHAR): Peace talks between the Union Government and various insurgent organisations of Assam, including ULFA, NDFB, COBRA, APLA, BCF, NLA and STF, have been ongoing for a considerable period. Several issues involved in these talks are complex and cannot be resolved within a stipulated timeframe. Moreover, the dialogue has largely remained confined to members of the executive leadership of these organisations. At the grassroots level, many former cadres are living among the general population and are facing serious socio-economic hardships. The stipend provided by the Union Government is inadequate even to meet their basic personal needs, making it extremely difficult for them to support their families. In order to ensure sustainable rehabilitation and timely resolution of these issues, meaningful employment opportunities must be provided to them. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to consider the formation of a dedicated armed battalion by inducting such individuals, and to put in place appropriate rehabilitation measures so that they may lead lives of dignity and social respect. Failure to address these concerns may lead to

discontent and could have adverse consequences. I further request that organisations representing Gorkha groups and the KLO also be included in the ongoing peace dialogue process.

14.05 hrs

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): Madam Chairperson, discussions under Rule 193 on the matter of agriculture have been pending for the last two to three days. I would like to request that this discussion be taken up first, as the Hon. Minister of Finance is presently engaged in the other House with the Taxation Laws. Therefore, after that, the said discussion may be taken up.

HON. CHAIRPERSON:

Shri Kodikunnil Suresh ji .

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Hon. Chairperson, thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise a discussion under Rule 193 on the topic 'Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers'. At the outset I would like to submit that the Government has no intent, desire, and genuine concern towards addressing the issues of farmers in the country. The notice I gave for this discussion read -- 'Agrarian crisis and farmers' distress'. The Government did not accept the language in which I submitted my notice for this discussion, instead have formulated the language for the discussion in another way. The Government chose to ignore the topic that would have exposed the failure of the BJP Government to the public. The Government formulated another language which read -- 'Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers'. They have not chosen the straight path but instead have taken a circuitous route to deviate from the core issue. But this anti-farmer and anti-agriculturist attitude of the BJP Government thus stands exposed in this House as the Modi Government is afraid of facing the truth of deeply disturbing agrarian crisis engulfing the country by refusing to address the real concern. The Congress and other like-minded parties decided to raise this issue in this august House.

The Ministry of Agriculture assumed a great importance under the various Congress Governments as the Congress party viewed agriculture as the most important aspect for the livelihood for its people. More than two-thirds of the population in this country derives its livelihood from agriculture and farming. It is only natural to stand by them and the Congress party always stood with the farmers, labourers, the deprived and the working class. While the Congress Governments stood with the cause of the farmers, the NDA Governments, be it the first NDA Government of 1999 or be it the successive Modi Governments of 2014 and 2019 systematically diluted the powers of the Ministry of Agriculture and made it into a rubber stamp. There is no freedom for the Ministers in this Government to act on issues affecting farmers. This NDA Government is nothing but an extension of the corporates, ultra-rich and imperial interests. The Congress Governments understood the pain of the farmers, the agony of the tillers, crisis of the small and marginal farmers. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru stated and I quote: -

“If our agricultural foundation is not strong, then the industry we seek to build will not have a strong basis either. Apart from that the situation in the country is such that if our food front cracks up, everything else will crack up. Therefore, we dare not weaken our food front.”

And true to his belief, Nehru Ji, in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) devoted 17.4 per cent of its total expenditure to agriculture and community development. A major portion of the outlay for irrigation and power, that is, 27.2 per cent, also went to agricultural development. Unlike the BJP, the Congress Governments had a galaxy of Ministers for agriculture who understood the farmers and their situation.

I must draw the attention of the House to the following important steps taken by the Congress Party for the progress of farmers. By 1956, the Zamindari Abolition Act was passed in many Provinces. Due to conferment of land rights, around 30 lakh tenants and share-croppers were able to acquire ownership rights over a total cultivated area of 62 lakh acres throughout the country. This was the benefit of the passage of this Act. This was the most revolutionary step undertaken by the greatest ever Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, who gave the farmers their right to land and cultivate and rescued them from the chains of landlords and zamindars. That was done by the Congress Party unlike the Government under Shri Narendra Modi which destroys the livelihood of farmers and makes them helpless. The Congress Party gave the farmers their land which they can proudly proclaim as their own.

Creation of institutions was the next step for building a confident farmer development-oriented India and towards this end,

the Food Corporation of India was set up to maintain demand and supply situation such as maintenance of buffer stocks. The Agricultural Prices Commission, the National Water Commission and National Agricultural Commission were established to suggest policy measures to tackle the issues of growth and distribution.

The next step was to create the “Temples of Modern India” by which irrigation became a possibility. Some of the game changing projects like Bhakra-Beas and Damodar Valley addressed energy shortage and irrigation infrastructure helping the farmers with technologies and support. Then fertiliser plants were set up and these plants supplied subsidised fertilisers to farmers. Institutes were set up for research of crops and seeds which developed high yielding seeds and drought/disease-resistant crops. The concept of minimum support price was started to prevent distress selling of crops by farmers to village moneylenders. Then came the Green Revolution under which the productivity of our farmers doubled and that made India self-sufficient in food grain production.

I would also mention about the change and progress of input use in Indian agriculture from 1950-51 to 1990-91. There was a change from using bullocks to tractors. For tilling per thousand hectares, mere 0.5 tractors were used and it became 5.8 tractors with the same measurement of inputs. This proves that there was progress in farming inputs and adoption of technology. From this

situation, the Congress Governments and their visionary leaders like Pandit Nehru Ji, Indira Gandhi ji and Rajiv Gandhi Ji brought the country to a stage where we are able to stand tall and self-sufficient to feed 135 crore people of this country. Can the Government under the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, ever say that they received a nation which was empty? It was made self-sufficient by the efforts of the Congress Party by transforming it bit by bit and by policy after policy through progressive reforms aimed at the welfare of even the last citizen of the country. So, when the Prime Minister and the NDA Governments make claims of building the country, they should remember that the Congress Party had built this nation which supported its farmers all the time. That is why, the India, which BJP wants, will not become, as India's DNA is composed of sacrifices of the Congress Party and initiatives of its leaders.

All you did, apart from blaming the Government of Congress, was to destroy every institution that helped to visualise the development of the country for mere political revenge. The Planning Commission, which you renamed as 'NITI Aayog' is nothing but 'ANITI Aayog', as it made the most falsified Report and fooled the country. Madam, the doubling of farmers' income, which is a pet project of the Government is a plot to cover up its lack of interest in making agriculture sustainable. It states to double

the farmers' income by 2022. What is the reality? Most of the kharif crops, except cotton, are going to witness a drop in production from 12 per cent to 4.5 per cent, due to heavy rains and floods in many parts of the country during the last monsoon season. Madam Chairperson, rice and main kharif oilseed crop soybean produced is expected to fall by 12 per cent to 90 million tonnes (mt) and 12.15 mt respectively, the pulses output is estimated to be nearly 8.2 mt, 4.5 lower than the previous year's production estimates of 8.59 mt. A total of 137 districts in 12 States, that are, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh, were affected by excess rains that led to floods in many regions and 4.5 million hectares of land was inundated, out of which 3.2 million hectares was the agricultural land. It is a very serious issue. What is the Government's policy and plan for addressing the losses suffered by the farmers in this matter?

Madam Chairperson, now, I come to the observation on the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry of Home Affairs has confirmed, through the National Crime Records Bureau's Report that 11,379 farmers died by suicide in India in 2016. It is a Report of the National Crime Records Bureau, not my Report. This translates into 948 suicides every month, or 31 suicides every day.

This is the Government's record. This is the record of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Madam, in the 17th Lok Sabha, the question about farmers' suicides was asked ten times in every question. The Government has two standard answers. One is, "There is no proposal on waiver of crop loans under consideration of the Government of India", the other one is, "The Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee in 2016 to recommend a strategy for doubling of farmers' income by the year 2022." Is there anything else this Government can actually say in this serious matter where farmers are ending their lives every day? Madam, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, is another half-baked programme that the Government will use in its defence. It is noted from several quarters of the country that even as the cropping season is underway, the support of this Scheme has not reached farmers in most of the regions of the country. Out of the allocation of Rs. 75,000 crore for Financial Year 2019-20, Rs. 27,937.26 crore have been spent until end of October and this was stated in the House by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and also my good friend, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar Ji himself. Do you agree?

What is the *Economic Survey* saying? I go into the *Economic Survey* with regard to the agricultural scenario in this country. Growth of agriculture sector has decreased from 6.3 per cent in

2016-17 to 2.9 per cent in 2018-19. Gross fixed capital formation in agriculture has decreased from 17.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 15.2 per cent in 2017-18. The contribution of agriculture to the Gross Value Added has decreased from 15 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.4 per cent in 2018-19. The agriculture sector growth decreased from 4.9 per cent to 2.1 per cent between 2019 and 2020 and still there are talks by this Government for doubling the farmers' income by 2022. How is it possible? Hon. Minister may let us know that.

I would invite the attention of this august House to the time when Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister of India and the UPA Government under the leadership of Shrimati Sonia Gandhi Ji. The UPA policies have led to a historical high agricultural output. This became possible because of the Government's thrust on improving agricultural inputs such as quality seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers. A scheme for developing and improving infrastructure for producing and distributing superior quality seeds to farmers at affordable prices was implemented and in initial stage, about 32.8 million tonnes of certified quality seeds were available. Better connectivity of rural areas, easy access to agricultural markets and facilitation of agricultural credit to small and marginal farmers gave a helping hand to them. Growth in gross bank credit for rural and semi-urban areas had been steadily increasing under the UPA Government, with agricultural credit increasing

significantly. Gramin banks were established to help the farmers. The post-harvest loans were granted to farmers against negotiable warehouse receipts at commercial rates against the distress sale done by them in the past. Capital investment in agriculture and allied sectors rose from 13.5 per cent of GDP in 2004-05 to 20.1 per cent, coupled with higher support prices announced ahead of the sowing season. All this made farming lucrative again.

Just now I compared it to the UPA regime. Now, I come to the NDA regime as to what they have done over the last five years. As compared to the first NDA regime, average yearly Minimum Support Prices were higher by 55 per cent for wheat, 81 per cent for coarse cereals, and 75 per cent for paddy. The average annual food grain yield has increased by 207 kg per hectare. The average food grain production per year during UPA was 28 million tonnes, more than that of first NDA's rule. This excess food stock is enough to meet half of the nation's Food Security Bill requirement of 54.92 million tonnes per year.

The Vidarbha package by the UPA is another important milestone that addressed the agrarian crisis where Rs. 3750 crore package was announced by the UPA Government. Above all, a scheme of debt waiver and debt relief for farmers of Rs. 50,000 crore and the one-time settlement relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore together coming to a sum of Rs.

60,000 crore in the Union Budget of 2008-09 in the UPA-I Government. These are some of the measures of the UPA Government under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh-ji and the UPA Chairperson, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi-ji. But what is happening today? The onion crisis in India has left people in distress. A kilo of onion is retailing at Rs 90 to Rs.100 in almost all the States of India. It is peaking at Rs. 120 to Rs. 130 a kilo in major cities. But are the farmers getting any benefit from the whole issue?

Madam, one report says that a farmer from Maharashtra was forced to sell onions at Rs. 8 per kilo, which is nearly 15 times less than the rate, which the consumers are currently paying for a kilo of onion. So, traders are hoarding. Black marketing is on the rise; and the farmers get nothing and the consumer also gets a terrible jolt. It was only because of the strong protests by the Congress Party that the BJP Government retreated from signing the RCEP Agreement, which would have destroyed the farmers of India. Not only the Congress Party but the entire Opposition in the country strongly opposed the signing of the RCEP Agreement. That is why this Government went away from the RECP Agreement.

Kharif and rabi crops suffered extensive damages, and the BJP Government ignored the farmers and refused to raise the MSP, which worsened the farmers' crisis. The reasons for crop loss apart from climate change, are lack of planning and lack of execution of

timely policies for helping farmers. There is no compensation for farmers to address their losses. Banks are refusing to give loans to farmers. Banks have become the parking grounds for the rich. There is no declaration of any special package to help the farmers in this continuing crisis.

So, it is not just the farmers, but the entire country is suffering from multiple atrocities and failures of the BJP Government. Unemployment, job loss, agricultural failure, industrial slowdown and recession are the gifts, which the Modi Government is giving to the people of this country. Madam, the Modi Government has failed on all fronts. It has failed in managing the agrarian crisis. In their idea, Indian farmers are seen as ‘perishable commodities.’ Once Agriculture used to feed three-fourth of India’s population, but their livelihood is breathing its last as an insensitive Government is moving away from protecting them.

HON. CHAIRPERSON : Please conclude, now.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Madam, I am concluding in another five minutes. Let me, now, come to some points concerning my State of Kerala. Repeated floods and natural calamities including landslides have caused massive destruction in Kerala in 2018 and 2019. Despite extensive damage to life, property, and livelihood due to these repeated floods in Kerala, the Central

Government has ignored appeals for help and assistance. The farmers in Kerala, who are mostly, small and medium-scale farmers, are in a desperate position due to extensive crop loss. They need to be compensated immediately. The post disaster needs assessment by the Kerala Government and the UNDP reveals that Kerala has suffered a total loss of Rs. 31,000 crore in the year 2018 due to floods, which was the worst ever since 1924.

Nearly 341 landslides were reported from 10 districts. The devastating floods and landslides affected 5.4 million people, displaced 1.4 million people.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude, now.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Madam, I am the initiator of this discussion. So, I should be given maximum time to speak. It is my right. Please do not ring the bell. Madam, nearly 341 landslides were reported from ten districts. The devastating floods and landslides affected 5.4 million people and displaced 1.4 million people. The State Government reports that the floods and landslides caused extensive damage to houses, roads, railways, bridges, power supply, communication networks, and other infrastructure. The crops and livestock have been washed away. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) conducted by the UN under the leadership of the Government of Kerala estimates the total recovery

needs to be at US\$ 4.4 billion. The unforeseen and unimaginable impact of the flood in 2018 has left the State in dire straits.

Madam, now, I am coming to my last point. Nearly 52 per cent of Kerala's population lives in rural areas and 17.15 per cent of the population depends on the agricultural sector including crops, livestock and fisheries. Our hon. Minister for Fisheries is here. It is a means of livelihood. The sector contributes to 11 per cent of the total gross state value addition at current prices, crops 5.42 per cent, livestock 3.84 per cent and fisheries 1.78 per cent. All three sub-sectors – crops, livestock and fisheries – have suffered losses and damages in the flooding and landslides of 2018. Crops were most heavily affected, which is contributing 88 per cent of the total loss and damage to the sector, followed by livestock, which is 10 per cent, and fishery or aquaculture, which is 2 per cent. Finally, subsistence agriculture across all three sub-sectors is an important source of income for rural communities. To conclude, I would like to cite the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: "Everything else can wait, but not agriculture." Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH (BALIA): Madam Chairperson, it has become an established practice that whenever Parliament meets, the issue of farmers invariably figures in our deliberations. This is only natural, as India is an agrarian country and agriculture remains the backbone of our economy. Consequently, Parliament is duty-bound to discuss the concerns of farmers, and I firmly believe that this House stands united in its commitment to finding solutions to their problems. I am confident that Mulayam Singh ji, the most senior Member present in the House, would concur that there is broad unanimity in Parliament on the need to address farmers' issues. However, it is often observed that when discussions are held with a view to resolving these problems, measures taken by the Government are viewed by members of the Opposition through a partisan lens, leading to the perception that the Government has failed, and the debate then becomes centred on criticism rather than constructive solutions. The challenges faced by agriculture and farmers have not arisen overnight. As a Member of the ruling party, I state with conviction that these challenges cannot be resolved overnight either. Agricultural problems have evolved over a long period, and their resolution requires a phased, sustained, and long-term approach.

You have made a passing reference to this issue. Had Shri Adhir Ranjan listened attentively, it would have been easier for me to present my point. You have spoken about the problems of farmers. I would like to ask this House, from 1952 to 2014, which Government ever extended direct financial assistance to farmers in a manner that instilled confidence and goodwill that the Government was genuinely working for them? It is the first Government led by Shri Narendra Modi that has provided Rs. 6,000 directly to all farmers whose names are recorded in the land records. The month of Kartik is the sowing season for the Rabi crop. Members may ask farmers themselves about the impact of this measure. You may not engage directly with farmers and may know them only through books, but I have just returned after interacting with them. Farmers have stated that the first month of Kartik passed smoothly, without hardship, and that sowing activities are progressing efficiently. Since 1952, repeated references are made to the abolition of the Zamindari system during the tenure of Pandit Nehru, claiming that land was distributed to the poor. The Zamindari system was abolished in 1956. At that time, two distinct categories of farmers emerged, those who received two to two-and-a-half acres of land, and others who received 20 to 25 acres. When land was allegedly distributed to the poor and the Zamindari system

was abolished, how did the brother-in-law of ...*come to acquire 300-400 acres of land in Haryana and Rajasthan? This is a matter that requires serious examination and understanding. I would like to know how ... *came to possess 300-400 acres of land. The abolition of the Zamindari system was meant for the benefit of India's farmers. ...(*Interruptions*) Please be seated. You are becoming unnecessarily agitated. This is not the subject under discussion. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Only Hon. Member's words will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Madam Chairperson, there are certain diseases for which cures have already been discovered, such as cancer, tuberculosis, and heart ailments. However, there is one disease that afflicts people within Parliament itself, for which no cure has yet been found. That disease is the craving for publicity. Some Hon. Members appear to be suffering from this ailment, and its remedy has not yet been discovered. The cure for this ailment can only come from within. When we raise certain points, some Members immediately rise and begin speaking. I am only saying this much: the problems of farmers did not arise in a single day, and

* Not Recorded.

they cannot be resolved in a single day either. The issue of farmers' suicides was raised, but the Hon. Members who raised it have since left the House. It is important to examine since when farmers have been committing suicide. Merely counting the number of suicides will not provide a solution. I am not claiming that no farmer committed suicide during the period of governance of my party. However, it is necessary to examine where this phenomenon began. When Shrimati Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, farmers died, but it did not become news. When Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, farmers died, yet it did not make headlines. When Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh was the Prime Minister, farmers died; at that time, Shri Mulayam Singh was the Chief Minister, and even then farmers died, but it did not become news.

Madam, when Shri Chandra Shekhar was the Prime Minister and Shri Manmohan Singh was his Economic Adviser, whose economic policies are now being discussed in this House, farmers also lost their lives during that period, but it did not become a matter of public debate. The issue of farmers' suicides entered national discourse when Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister and Shri Manmohan Singh was the Minister of Finance, particularly after a large number of farmers committed suicide in Vidarbha. Even following economic liberalisation, farmer suicides continued, and only then did the issue receive widespread attention across the

country. Even today, I maintain that in a nation of farmers, nothing can be more tragic than farmers being compelled to take their own lives. However, this problem cannot be addressed through economic measures alone. It also requires social solutions, cultural interventions, and political resolve. Unless India's economic, social, and political policies are designed with villages at their core, it will be extremely difficult to resolve these issues.

Madam, the matter of onion prices has just been raised. I would like to ask Hon. Members Shri Adhir Ranjan Choudhury and Shri Sougata Ray to state when onions are sown. This is the season for sowing Rabi crops. If any Hon. Member can name even a single Rabi crop, I would readily welcome it.

Someone has apparently advised their leader, Shri Rahul Gandhi, to speak about farmers, believing that merely talking about farmers will make him appear as a farmers' leader, just as Jawaharlal Nehru worked during the Awadh Kisan Movement under the leadership of Baba Ramchandra. However, to truly become a farmers' leader, one must follow the path shown by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. To become a farmers' leader, one must also follow the path on which Shri Narendra Modi, as Prime Minister, is working today. Likewise, our Party's National President, Shri Amit Shah, as the leader of the Party, consistently works towards finding solutions for farmers' issues, and that is the

path that must be followed. Resolving farmers' problems is a difficult task and it is beyond your capacity. You practise a different kind of politics, and it is that very politics which placed you there and will remove you from there as well, because for the first time farmers have awakened and have formed their own Government. I can say this with confidence, and many Ministers of our Government are present here, that for the first time farmers, through their support, firmly established the Government of Shri Narendra Modi. This Government was formed because it directly transferred Rs. 6,000 into the accounts of farmers in whose names the land records are registered. That is why this Government came into being. This very amount of Rs. 6,000 was being discussed in the previous Session. At that time, it was not clear as to who would receive this amount. If six brothers, or brothers and sisters, or parents, or even ten brothers are named in the land records for one bigha of land, then each of the ten individuals has received Rs. 6,000 in their own name. Agricultural produce worth Rs. 60,000 is not generated from one bigha of land. ...*(Interruptions)* Shri Suresh ji, you may not be aware of this. Please do not worry. A farmer written only on paper is not a real farmer. Shri Sougata Ray and Shri Adhir Ranjan Choudhury may be present here, but Shri Virendra Singh is a farmer sitting here. Shri Mulayam Singh ji knows this well. Everyone whose name appears in the land records

is receiving Rs. 6,000 each. You lack this information because you never made any effort to ensure that farmers received this Rs. 6,000.

They are speaking about onions. Shri Mulayam Singh ji was an MLA in the 1970s. On one occasion, a Government fell merely on the issue of onions. These Members believe that by raising the issue of onions, some political opportunity might emerge. Onions are produced in Maharashtra and Gujarat, but they are produced in no smaller quantity in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. I have been elected from Ballia. Earlier, I was elected from the Bhadohi Parliamentary Constituency. There is the Karail region of Mohammadabad tehsil, Ballia. The Gangetic plain is the most fertile plain in the world. One should go there and see how farmers cultivate onions. Farmers in Nashik do not produce onions of that kind. Even today, individual farmers in that region have hundreds of sacks of onions stored in their homes, and in my area onions are selling at Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per kilogram. How long will you continue with this politics of onions? ...*(Interruptions)* What is being shown does not represent the actual position on onion prices. In Mohammadabad, onions are readily available, and I can arrange a truckload at Rs. 25 per kilogram. ...*(Interruptions)* Very well. You may confine yourself to what you know; please do not instruct me. I shall state what I know. Therefore, when it is stated that onion prices have risen, I find it difficult to accept. Whenever the prices of agricultural produce rise,

there is an uproar in this House. If the price of onions rises, or sugar rises, or wheat rises, or milk rises, there is an outcry that prices have increased. I am a farmer, and therefore I say this clearly: those who produce do not decide the prices. Agriculture is the only sector where producers do not determine the price of what they produce. Shri Giriraj Singh ji is present here; he is the Minister for Animal Husbandry. The price of milk is not decided by the farmer who produces it. Farmers do not decide the prices of wheat, sugarcane, or cotton. When sugarcane goes to the factory and sugar is produced, it is the sugar mill owner who decides what price the farmer will receive.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Virendra ji, please address the Chair.

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Madam Chairperson, I am addressing the House with due regard to the Chair. Madam Chairperson, as I was saying, there are broadly two categories of farmers in our country. One category consists of farmers owning about two and a half acres of land, while the other consists of farmers owning around twenty acres of land. The Hon. Minister for Agriculture is present here, and I would like to urge him that since others have not been able to address this issue, we must now take responsibility for it ourselves. In the effort to reduce the cost of cultivation, reliance on manual labour in agriculture has declined, and mechanised farming has increased substantially. When policies were framed

earlier, it was noted that in Japan the average landholding is about two and a half acres, whereas in the United States the average landholding is approximately four hundred and fifty acres. In other words, an average farmer in the United States owns around four hundred and fifty acres of land, while in Japan the average holding is only two and a half acres. Japan accordingly designed agricultural machinery suitable for farmers with small landholdings, enabling them to work efficiently within their limited acreage. Similarly, the United States developed machinery appropriate for farmers with very large landholdings. However, we failed to clearly identify the nature and needs of Indian farmers. As farming gradually shifted away from manual labour, we did not determine what kind of implements should be developed for Indian conditions. What was the need to manufacture only large machines and heavy tractors? Instead, smaller and more appropriate machines should have been developed for small and marginal farmers. ...(*Interruptions*) That point has already been made, that this occurred during their tenure. When President Kennedy used to visit Delhi, Shri Nehru ji would accompany him.

I beg your indulgence to submit that, on both sides of this House, development is often assessed solely through the lens of Gross Domestic Product. However, the economic benchmark of villages and the rural system is measured through the strength of

the agricultural economy. GDP has no direct correlation with this reality. Rural prosperity cannot be determined merely by GDP figures. Several festivals have recently been celebrated. Diwali, Dussehra, and Chhath have all been observed. Has consumption declined during this period? Even today, if one visits village and small-town markets, one will witness large crowds. These crowds are not assembling for mere display; they are there to make purchases. Consider the expenditure incurred during weddings. Today, when a young man attends a wedding, he changes multiple suits. In the time of Shri Mulayam Singh ji, people would leave home wearing a single set of clothes, return after marriage, and continue wearing the same attire for months. Where was consumption then? If consumption has truly declined today, how is it that people now wear several sets of clothes? One must also look at the present level of expenditure on marriages. While I do not endorse extravagance, the claim that purchasing power has weakened reflects a lack of understanding of India's rural and agricultural economy. India is strong for this very reason. India is powerful for this very reason. India is self-reliant and self-respecting for this very reason, because the agricultural economy of villages will always remain robust. The strength of this economy lies in its labour-based character. In villages, people continue to

uphold a culture of saving alongside their income, and it is this tradition that sustains the rural economy.

Madam Chairperson, in an effort to malign the nation and discredit the Government, it is being alleged that automobile sales have declined. If automobile purchases have truly declined, then why do our roads remain perpetually congested? If sales have fallen, one may visit Delhi, Ghaziabad, or places such as Ballia, Ghazipur, and Bhadohi. Traffic congestion is evident everywhere. In many households today, there are ten or even twenty vehicles. There has been little attempt to assess the appropriate relationship between consumer demand and production, or to reflect on how long this imbalance has existed. Only when production is aligned with actual consumer demand will automobile manufacturers be able to determine sustainable levels of output.

Madam Chairperson, I will conclude my remarks with one further submission. The MGNREGA scheme was introduced by the previous Government, and our Government defined its constructive role. Through you, I would like to request the Government to link MGNREGA more closely with agriculture. MGNREGA is a scheme intended to generate employment. How many village roads and paved lanes can be laid, and how many drains can be constructed? Our Government, and the Hon. Finance Minister, have allocated substantial funds for MGNREGA. In the name of water

conservation, wherever riverbank erosion takes place, why can such erosion not be prevented through MGNREGA? When MGNREGA funds are already being utilised for water conservation, why can we not use them to prevent river erosion near villages? In our area of Ballia, erosion has taken place towards Sherpur. In Mohammadabad tehsil, erosion occurs regularly. In Bairia tehsil, villages such as Dubey Chhapra, Uday Chhapra, and Bhusaula have suffered erosion. In our region, the village of Nauranga lies across the river and has also been affected by erosion. Such erosion can be prevented using the MGNREGA funds of the concerned village panchayat. The funds allocated to that village under MGNREGA are sufficient to address this problem. Why can such river erosion control measures not be formally integrated with the MGNREGA scheme?

Madam Chairperson, a structured policy should also be evolved to link MGNREGA with agriculture. One agricultural season has already passed, and preparations should now begin for the next. There is a limit to how many village roads, paved lanes, drains, and pathways can be constructed. I would like to inform the House that work has already been initiated in my constituency through the MGNREGA scheme. The focus is on connecting villages to agricultural fields. When villages are connected to fields through MGNREGA, farmers are able to access their land more

easily, and improved access directly contributes to higher agricultural productivity when farmers are able to move freely, cultivate their land efficiently, and explore the possibility of undertaking a second crop, overall agricultural production increases, thereby directly benefiting farmers. I shall conclude by drawing attention to another issue which has not been raised by Shri Suresh ji of the Congress Party. In recent times, agriculture has suffered severe losses due to floods and excessive rainfall. To address such losses, both the present Government and previous Governments formulated the crop insurance scheme. Under this scheme, insurance premiums are deducted through the Kisan Credit Card. Our Government has enacted legislation to ensure that farmers are compensated for their losses and that effective solutions are provided. However, through you, I would like to submit to the Government that insurance companies do not actually disburse the compensation to farmers. On this issue, I believe that all Members of this House should be in agreement that a statutory framework must be put in place to ensure that insurance companies compulsorily compensate farmers for their losses. Madam Chairperson, I shall conclude within a minute. The malpractice and irregularities being witnessed in the functioning of these insurance companies must be addressed, and effective solutions must be found. I will conclude by stating that by providing assistance to

farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, the Hon. Prime Minister has performed a truly historic act. Before concluding my remarks in this debate, I would like to request the Hon. Minister for Agriculture that a pension scheme must certainly be formulated for farmers who are sixty years of age and above. One scheme has been introduced under which farmers aged 40 contribute Rs. 50 annually and become eligible for a pension upon attaining the age of 60. However, once a farmer reaches the age of 60, a pension should be provided to all farmers, regardless of prior contributions. ...(*Interruptions*) Madam Chairperson, I shall conclude my remarks within one minute. When personnel serving in the Armed Forces, the Police, the Education Department, or the Health Department retire, they are provided with a pension as well as terminal benefits. It is rightly said that they serve the nation. Farmers too produce foodgrains. They feed themselves and they feed the nation. Nearly forty percent of the population does not even go near agricultural fields and does not engage in farming. Yet, it is the farmer who produces foodgrains, milk, fruits, and vegetables for them as well. The farmer also serves the nation. When farmers attain the age of 60, their lives often become extremely difficult and marked by hardship. Therefore, I would like to submit that the Government must formulate a scheme to provide pensions to farmers as well. With this request, I conclude my remarks.

[English]

***SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM (THANJAVUR):** Hon. Madam Chairperson, Vanakkam. Before starting my speech, I wish to convey my sincere thanks to Hon. Union Minister for Agriculture for sending a letter to me with lots of responsibility and concern as reply to my questions raised during the discussion on Demands for Grants for Agriculture during the previous Session of Lok Sabha. When farmers go to sell salt, it starts raining; and if they go to sell rice bran, it becomes windy. What can the farmers do? It is a routine affair that Indian farmers are affected every year due to natural calamity and climate change in some parts of the country. During the last ten days onion has become a most sought-after vegetable. During the discussion on supplementary demands for grants held yesterday, there were discussions on onion for more than half-an-hour. It took half-an-hour for Shri Adhir Ranjan Choudhury, Group leader of the our coalition to come out of discussion on onion as he was seized of the matter. On earlier occasion even there was no remunerative price for onion it was dumped as waste on the streets. This was the case with milk, potato and tomato when there was no remunerative price for them. On all these occasions this House and

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

the people of the country have not paid attention in hearing the issues of farmers with due concern.

15.02 hrs

(Shri N.K. Premachandran *in the Chair*)

Only when the price of an agriculture produce is increased, this House and people of the country intend to think about farmers. During yesterday's discussion many Hon. Members raised concern about non-availability of an alternative method for onion drying. A Research Centre named Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology in Thanjavur under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, has found an alternative method as regards onion-drying. In our area there is a place where 20 tonnes of onion is produced in one hectare land. Through this alternate method they go for onion drying and store them. Perishable items like onion, potato, tomato, etc. have to be produced, procured and stored by way of cold chain storage systems for use of people every year.

The Government started Food Corporation of India for storing food grains. Similarly, there should be a storage facility for perishable items too. Cyclones have played havoc in different parts of the State of Tamil Nadu during last one year. Ockhi, Thane and Gaja cyclones have hit Tamil Nadu. Due to Gaja cyclone, more than 60 lakh coconut trees were uprooted in the delta districts of Cauvery basin. As many as one Crore Mango, Jackfruit, Peepal, Banyan and

Neem trees have fallen due to the cyclones. But the Union and State Governments have not bothered much. For a coconut tree to give an yield it takes approximately 7 years. But the compensation for a coconut tree is fixed at Rs1100/- What can the farmer do with this meagre amount? You send a Central team to visit the natural calamity affected areas. If such a disaster takes place in any part of our country, the Union Government has the facility to monitor and assess the ground reality.

During the previous regimes when D.M.K. was in the coalition, if a natural disaster hits an area, particularly the coastal areas hit by Tsunami, the very next day, Union Ministers visited the place to take stock of the situation. Damage was assessed and the relief was provided within a span of one or two weeks. But when Gaja cyclone devastated Tamil Nadu, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu went for an aerial survey of the affected areas through an helicopter just for five minutes and from there he proceeded to his native place to attend a family function with a non-veg feast. We expected the Prime Minister or the Union Ministers to visit the Gaja cyclone-affected areas. But nobody turned up. Even today people are on streets under the scorching sun with no sigh of relief for them. If a central team visit a place affected by a natural disaster after three months' time, how will they be able to assess the damage caused by the disaster?

My friend Shri Kodikkunnil Suresh accused yourself and your government. I do not want to accuse you. Rather I want to give you some valuable and constructive suggestions for your consideration. A member of the ruling party who spoke before me said that the Union Government had announced provision of Rs 6,000/- to farmers as financial assistance. Along with this, if an additional amount of Rs.6,000/- is provided by the State Government concerned, it will become Rs.12,000/- and the farmers will get a better relief in their lives. If this proposal is followed in BJP ruled States of the country, we can also insist upon the our Coalition ruled States of the country to provide this additional amount of Rs.6,000/- to each of the farmers. I request you to immediately send a team to visit the natural calamity-affected area once it was hit by a natural calamity and to provide necessary compensation to the affected farmers. Farmers should get help immediately to go for next harvest.

There should be long term storage facilities to preserve perishable items like tomato, potato, onion, etc. You have provided tax exemption to the industrial sector to the tune of Rs. 1.5 lakh Crore which was rolled out during the previous Budget and also through the announcements of the Finance Ministry thereafter. Why can't you waive off all the farm loans availed by farmers? The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaignar, as mentioned in the

election manifesto of 2006, waived off Rs.7,000 Crore worth farm loans. The then Union Government also waived Rs.70,000 Crore worth farm loans. If you are really concerned about farmers, you can waive off farm loans completely. Even the Maharashtra State Government which assumed power recently, has stated that it is pondering over the issue of waiving off all the farm loans in the State. Instead of providing benefits to some hundreds of people, you should go for benefitting Crores of farmers of the country. Cane growers send their sugarcanes to sugar mills for extraction of sugar. But the sugarcane farmers are not given the pending amount that is due to them. The sugar mill owners engage in exploitation of farmers, particularly the cane growers. Union and State Governments concerned should intervene immediately and ensure that the farmers get their pending dues paid to them by the sugar mill owners.

Fishermen are equally affected along with farmers at times of natural disasters. Compensation to fishermen should be provided well in time. Fishermen of Mallipattinam and other areas in my Thanjavur constituency who had lost their boats due to Gaja cyclone, have not received any relief or compensation till date. Day by day, population of India is exploding. When you go to a Doctor he advises to take food 6 times a day instead of three times. The demand for food is also on the rise as regards population. During

60s we imported, under PL 480, wheat from the United States of America. We were at the mercy of USA at that point of time. If you want to achieve self-sufficiency in food production unlike 60s, do not calculate on what you do for the welfare of farmers of our country. No sensible farmer will like to take alms from anyone, especially from the government. But the prevailing situation has made the farmers to expect something in the form of financial assistance from the government.

I will conclude my speech by saying this. My friend sitting next to me is making sounds. I don't know whether he is doing that to encourage me or to give a caution. Only when the farmers plough the fields, we can get rice to eat. My friend Hon Member Shri Virendra Singh while speaking said that, unlike the Congress Government, the BJP Government has been working hard to protect the interests of farmers. I request you to work hard for the welfare of farmers not only by mere saying or in writing but also in actions. The farmers have given threefold number of seats to you in this august House. You keep in mind while working for them. Thank you for this opportunity.

SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE (SREERAMPUR): Sir, there are a number of reasons for loss of crops in our country. One of the reasons is the use of harmful synthetic chemicals. The policy of the Government is 'produce more and become prosperous'. Now it has become 'produce more and perish' for our Indian farmers. Farmers are using high external synthetic chemicals during farming, which causes 25 per cent of land degradation. Soil and water get poisoned with the use of synthetic chemicals, which result in the loss of crops in various parts of our country. So, the Government must take a policy decision in regard to utilisation of harmful synthetic chemicals in the agricultural field. Would it continue or would it be discontinued? Where would be the cut off line? What should be done? These decisions need to be taken by the Government.

Now, I come to genetically modified seeds. A number of social activist groups and studies proposed a link between expensive genetically modified crops and farmer suicides. Bt cotton was claimed to be responsible for farmer suicides. Bt cotton seeds cost nearly twice as much as ordinary ones. The higher costs forced many farmers into taking larger loans from private moneylenders, who charge exorbitant interest rates. The money lenders force farmers to sell their cotton to them at a price lower than the price given in the market. According to the study, it created a sort of debt

and economic stress, ultimately leading to suicide among farmers, increasing cost in farming sector with decreasing yields.

Secondly, there is a misdirection of Government subsidies and funds. As per reports by the Central Government and NCRB, the Government farming subsidies from 1993 to 2018 went to the dealers to produce the seeds and fertilizers, not to the farmers. It is not that the Government is not doing it, but to whom is it going ultimately? It is going to the dealers. In 2017, Rs. 35,000 crore of loans and subsidies were given to the entities in the cities of New Delhi and Chandigarh which do not have any farmers. Similarly, in Maharashtra, 60 per cent of the Government loans and subsidies were given to the people and entities residing in Mumbai. This has resulted in money being circulated between the Government, large and small corporations and politicians without any of it reaching farmers aggravating their woes. I am not saying that the Government is not releasing the subsidies but to whom it is going is what I am saying. It is going into the hands of a few entities in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh. It is not going to the farmers in the villages. They are not getting it. The middleman is enjoying the benefits. The Government needs a review of it.

The funds which have been given for subsidies, should be immediately checked or immediate audit should be conducted on

the entire scenario to see whether it has gone to the farmers or it is being enjoyed by the middleman.

I want to speak regarding the impact of cyclone. Cyclone in the coastal areas severely affects field crops, horticulture crops through direct damage by high-speed wind, torrential rains and extensive flooding. High tide may bring saline water and sand mass making the field unsuitable for agriculture. Super Cyclone in 1999 and Phailin in 2013 severely affected the crop production and livelihood of the farmers in coastal areas in eastern coast of India.

Sir, recently, Cyclone Bulbul, that battered the coastal districts of West Bengal has caused a loss of Rs. 23,811 crore in the State. The standing crop was damaged as well as crops like betel leaves. A great loss has been caused there. A total of 14,89,924 hectares of agricultural land was affected in the State of West Bengal and five lakhs houses have been damaged due to Cyclone Bulbul.

Now, the State Government of West Bengal has given Rs. 1,200 crore to the affected people of the State. Sir, I want to point out that when our hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal visited the Bulbul affected area, the hon. Prime Minister also had a conversation over telephone with the hon. Chief Minister and assured that the compensation will be given. But still, no money has been given to West Bengal. But in case of Gujarat, we have seen, you gave the

money overnight, overnight compensation had been given; in case of West Bengal, you are not giving the money because another ruling party is there. Why this discrimination between farmers of different States? Farmers are farmers whether they live in Gujarat, Kerala or West Bengal. I, therefore, would request the hon. Minister to look into this. Not only in West Bengal, about three lakh hectares of crops including horticulture have been affected because of cyclone Bulbul in Odisha as per a report of the Government of Odisha.

I now come to another problem and that is the human-elephant conflict. In India, 101 elephant corridors are there in the States of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala, etc. Elephants damaged crops, primarily paddy and maize, in over one million hectares of agricultural land. We need to reduce this human-elephant conflict to save the crops.

Between 1953 and 2017, India suffered damage to crops worth Rs.1,11,225.621 crore due to floods. That is nearly 30 per cent of the total damage, which is Rs.3,78,247.047 crore. In 2015, as per data from the Central Water Commission, country's total loss due to floods was Rs.57,291.1 crore.

Between 2016-17 and 2018-19, crop losses owing to floods in major States are: 11.71 lakh hectares in West Bengal, 11.82 lakh hectares in Bihar, and 12.67 lakh hectares in Uttar Pradesh.

Impact of pollution on agriculture is also an important factor. Air pollution causing damage to human health is an established fact. Apart from causing heart disease and asthma, pollutants are also damaging the yield of food crops, reducing their nutritional quality and safety, and are posing a major risk to food security. The time is ripe now. I would request the hon. Prime Minister to look into this. Air pollution is not only affecting human beings. It is affecting the crops also. Therefore, pollution control and agricultural production are now interlinked. In major cities in India, the level of pollutants often surpasses the safe limits and it does not look set to change any time soon. An increasing proportion of agricultural land is being affected by air pollution.

Researchers found that between 1980 and 2010, yields were up to 36 per cent lower than what they would have been without air pollution trends. In 2010 this loss was an equivalent of more than 24 million tonnes of wheat in India, which is worth around USD 5 billion.

Suicides by farmers are increasing day by day. I would just like to give the data in brief. We have seen 12,000 suicides being

reported in agricultural sector. Every year since 2013, they account for approximately 10 per cent of the total suicides. There were 3,000 farmer suicides in 2015. The victims had unpaid loans from local banks. Maharashtra had 1,293 suicides; Karnataka had 946. When these suicides were committed in Karnataka and Maharashtra, the Government there was a BJP-led Government. So, all these suicides have happened in these States.

Before concluding, I would like to say two things. Very often, I hear that people who talk about farmers after reading books are not talking about farmers. I hear this very often. We are also Members of Parliament. We also have a connection. His response suggests that one needs to commit a crime to understand criminal law, What kind of thing is this? Do not just demonize everyone's position. If one is born in the family of farmers, we all have respect for him but please do not disrespect others who are not coming from the farmers' family. That is my request. The hon. Minister is a very senior leader.

Now, what is the solution? I will tell you a few solutions. Small and marginal farmers should be encouraged to pull funds by leveraging their land. The advantage associated with larger land holding is the use of modern and mechanised farming techniques. Water supply for irrigation must be insulated from the vagaries of nature by better water management system. Attention must

particularly be paid to rain water harvesting and resolution of inter-State river water sharing disputes. Farmers must be educated about modern farming techniques and practices. Younger professionals must be encouraged to participate in farming activities. Farm loans at soft interest rates need to be made available and loan recovery procedure need to respect human rights. It should be discussed with the farmers as to how to deal with the private money lenders. That is the most important part.

Again, I am requesting the hon. Minister to kindly ensure that – you are giving subsidies, it is going from the Central Government's fund, it is going from the State Government's fund – subsidies go to the farmers, not to the entities in the cities.

Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me time. I am concluding now. You have given me time. I will keep my commitment. Cyclone Bulbul has affected West Bengal. You have seen that. The farmers have really lost a lot. I have already mentioned about the quantum of losses. There was also a telephonic assurance given by the hon. Prime Minister to our hon. Chief Minister on compensation. I will request, through you, the Agriculture Minister to kindly make it expeditious. That is my request. Thank you.

SHRI POCHA BRAHMANANDA REDDY (NANDYAL): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to put forth our party YSRCP's views on crop losses. In India, majority of our population is still dependent on agriculture. There is never an inappropriate time to discuss the issue concerning our farmers. In India, a large number of farmers undertake subsistence agriculture for survival. Farming is also undertaken on loans, which leads to debt trap most of the times. In this light, the worst adversity that farmers could face is crop loss. Such crop losses make survival of farmers a concern, wherein there have been many instances of farmers committing suicide due to loss of crops. The situation of landless and tenant farmers is much worse. Before entering into the nuances of this issue, I would like to congratulate our hon. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy Garu for launching the YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan scheme, through which landless and tenant farmers are set to get monetary support from the Government in our State.

Out of all the 29 States of India, through this scheme, maximum support is offered to the farmers of my State. Under this scheme, 51 lakh farmers, which includes more than 3 lakh tenant farmers, belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward community, will receive Rs.13,500 per annum as farm investment support.

A conscious effort has been made to include tenant and landless farmers, as they stand excluded from the vision of PM-KISAN Scheme. Such a move is bound to stoke up positive sentiments amongst the landless and tenant farmers, that the Government cares for them and is concerned about the difficulties faced by them in undertaking a hardworking task like agriculture and crop cultivation.

The support provided by the YSR Rythu Bharosa Scheme is bound to help farmers tide over crop losses, and also help invest in quality farming techniques that can prevent crop losses.

Sir, the reasons for crop losses in India have been studied by different organisations. The foremost reason for crop loss is found to be infestation by pests, weeds and climatic conditions like cyclones and untimely rains. ICAR scientists estimate that about 30-35 per cent of the annual crop yield in India gets wasted because of pests. The recent infestation by Fall Armyworm is fresh in our memory which affected almost ten Indian States. In a country where farmers do not get remunerative returns for their healthy produce, crop losses due to such avoidable reasons are unforgivable.

The reasons for high prevalence of such losses are:

1. Pesticides may be unaffordable to some farmers. Farmers may thus use other make-shift methods to protect crops from pests

which is low on effectiveness. In light of this, the Government support through schemes, like YSR Rythu Bharosa Scheme, will help farmers invest in good quality pesticides.

2. Quality of pesticides is lacking. At present, the quality control regime for pesticides is lacking. The proposed Pesticides Management Bill, 2019 can be a game-changer to ensure accountability in the aspect of effectiveness of pesticides.
3. Pests become resistant to pesticides because of the unscientific use of pesticides by farmers due to poor awareness. The extension programmes of the Government and the newly proposed Bill need to spread awareness about the scientific usage amongst farmers, especially the less empowered farmers.
4. There is poor focus on international best practices and Research and Development on crop protection means. There are good emerging trends and solutions for sustainable crop protection, which include crop protection chemicals, agronomy, fertigation, seed treatment and biotechnology development, which need to be encouraged.
5. Seeds of poor quality have no resilience against damages, which is a serious cause of concern.

Sir, almost 60 per cent of Indian agriculture is rain-fed. It is, therefore, dependent on the vagaries of monsoon for its success. So, another major reason for crop loss is the impact of drought.

Our State of Andhra Pradesh often faces such a situation which is beyond our control, especially in districts such as Anantapur, Kadapa, Chittoor and Kurnool. Our dedicated effort should go into crop-diversification, to grow less water intensive crops in these regions and successfully implement the Drought Mitigation Programme.

There is a need to relook at our MSP Policy which does not incentivise farmers to have a healthy cropping pattern. More often, the MSP announced would be higher but there would not be any procurement at the rates fixed by the Government. The Government should actively procure crops from the farmers at the MSP rates.

In coastal States, such as Andhra Pradesh, cyclones are a looming threat for crops. According to the preliminary estimates, in 2018, the Phethai Cyclone led to the damage of over 10 lakh hectares of crop. Such vagaries of weather conditions are bound to impact Indian agriculture due to its precarious nature. With climate change breathing down our necks, such natural calamities and vagaries are bound to rise, thus we need to consider preventive and damage control mechanisms much more seriously.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, lastly, post-harvest crop losses also demand our attention. Transport for farmers to take their crops to markets, is also a cause of concern. It becomes vital for us as parliamentarians to deliberate about our responsibility towards ‘*annadatas*’ and steps should be taken to ameliorate their conditions. The PM Fasal Bima Yojana is a significant help to farmers to face the consequences and tide over the losses that have come with crop damage. The Government should ensure its effective implementation and redress grievances in mission-mode to enhance effectiveness. Social audits of the schemes by its beneficiaries can be conducted to incorporate necessary changes.

Firstly, India should focus on R&D to tackle agriculture-specific challenges of climate change. This should include research in quality of seeds and pesticides for enhancing shelf-life of crops. We should also ensure that these technologies travel from lab to land without burdening farmers. Secondly, we have to map the cropping pattern and incentivise the shift wherever necessary.

The policy of farm loan waivers should be seriously re-looked and re-worked upon as it does not seem to tackle core problems of agriculture and crop losses. Rather, more investment is needed in efficient infrastructure for agricultural supply chain, including storage and transport, etc.

This discussion that we are having is not new. We all know the reasons for crop losses and have a general idea about what needs to be done and what should be our priority. It is high time that we all align together and show a dedicated political will to help our *Rythu*, who are now contemplating suicide and are running from pillar to post for their voice to be heard. Let us pledge to change the situation of agriculture in India. Prof. MS Swaminathan once said, 'if agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right in the country.' Thank you, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI VINAYAK BHAURAO RAUT (RATNAGIRI-SINDHUDURG): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I rise to express my views on the discussion that has taken place here regarding the farmers of the country along with Maharashtra. I am seeking permission to express my views on this matter in Marathi.

[English]

Thank you, Hon'ble Chairman Sir, for giving me an opportunity. Kindly allow me to speak in Marathi. Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, as you know the coastal area normally has rains till June 15, but this year this area has witnessed prolonged rains. From June to September, we had heavy rains in Maharashtra and it has continued till yesterday. This is the harvesting season for farmers and horticulturists, but this prolonged rain has devastated the standing crops. All the states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Goa are badly affected by floods. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, you won't believe but in Kolhapur and Sangli districts, the flood water had touched the height of 20 feet. Flood water of 10 rivers got accumulated in this area for complete 18 days. In Konkan region, almost all the rivers were heavily flooded. All terrains were completely submerged in flood water.

This was the first time in Maharashtra and even in India when this kind of natural calamity occurred. All the regions of Maharashtra like Mumbai, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidharbha and Khandesh had witnessed this heavy and unseasonal rains. Due to this the standing crop got rotten and damaged completely. Hon'ble Chief Minister Uddhavji Thakre undertook a visit to take stock of the situation. In Western Maharashtra, maize is the main crop but this time this crop was totally destroyed. The farmers were literally crying seeing the condition of their crops. Mother nature was not kind enough this time. All the major crops like paddy, maize, pomegranate, grapes pineapple are completely lost. When we visited pomegranates were scattered everywhere. Grapes are also grown in this area. But even the grapes growers had to incur heavy losses even after investing lakhs of rupees in the farms. Their dreams of higher education and marriage of their children are completely shattered. Their gloomy faces with dried eyes could move anybody's heart. All the helpless and needy farmers requested Uddhavji to kindly look into the matter and seek the central government help.

Hon'ble Chairman Sir, all the major crops like pomegranate, oranges, sweet lime, cotton, sugarcane etc. are completely devastated. Western Maharashtra is the land of sugarcane. There are many sugar mills in this area. But sugarcane cultivation requires

lots of water. This time the sugarcane also got rotten due to excess water. In Kondan coconut and betelnuts also got affected badly. Kharif and Rabi, both, the crops are damaged this time. Out of 36 districts of Maharashtra, all the farmers and horticulturists of 34 districts are completely at loss. On the basis of Times of India categorization, around 68% and 1 crore 52 lakh farmers have lost their crops completely. Around 93% of Kharif land turned completely barren. These farmers had no other means of livelihood except farming. In North Maharashtra, world famous best quality grapes are grown. This is also the land of onions. But all these cash crops like grapes, pomegranate, oranges, sweet lime, cotton, soyabean and sugarcane are totally lost.

Maharashtra has got 720 km. long coastal line. Fisherman community have been earning their bread and butter by selling fishes and seafood for generations together. Non-fishing season is normally of 3 months but this time it had been prolonged to 8 months. Fishermen also had to suffer heavy losses this season. Farmers, horticulturists and fishermen all got badly affected.

The estimated losses in Kolhapur and Sangli Districts were around 8000 crore. But the Union Government was ready to pay only 900 crore and we did not receive that money too. 10000 cattle and 750 people died in that biggest ever flood.

One Hon'ble Member had said that onions are available at rate of Rs.25 per kg in his area but we are purchasing it at the rate of Rs.150 per kg. Hon'ble Finance Minister should help out onion growers. The amount of money collected in Maharashtra in the form of Excise duty, Income Tax and GST is very, very high and we get back only 25% of it. Hence, I would like to request the Union Government to give Rs. 40,000 crore package for the devastated farmers of Maharashtra. Thank you.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Your speech was at a very supersonic speed. The interpreter was finding it very difficult to cope up with the Member.

Shri Kaushalendra Kumar ji.

[Translation]

SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR (NALANDA): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate, under Rule 193, in the discussion on the loss of crops and its impact on farmers.

Sir, India is an agriculture-based country. Mahatma Gandhi had said that the soul of the nation resides in its villages. Approximately 70 percent of the people engaged in agriculture live in villages. Today, we are discussing in this House their miserable and distressing condition. We repeatedly participate in discussions almost every time in the interest of farmers, but the plight of farmers remains exactly where it was. We come from farming families. Even today, when we visit our villages, we see that when a farmer has to arrange the marriage of his daughter or his son, he is compelled to mortgage his land. Not only this, whether it is the marriage of a daughter, any social function, the performance of last rites, or the education of children, they are able to meet these expenses only by mortgaging their fields. I commend the initiative of the Hon. Prime Minister and congratulate him for making sincere efforts to honour the commitment of providing Rs. 6000 to each farmer in instalments of Rs. 2000. I express my gratitude to him for this step. His stated objective is to double the income of farmers by 2022. However, the mere provision of Rs. 2000 cannot, by itself,

lead to a doubling of farmers' income. For that purpose, it is essential to bring about fundamental and structural improvements in the condition of farmers, and it is with this objective in mind that we are participating in this discussion today.

Sir, sustained efforts are being made both by the Union Government and by the State Government. I come from Bihar. In Bihar, nearly 15 districts are affected by floods caused by water flowing in from Nepal, while southern Bihar continues to remain in the grip of drought. When Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar, it was widely said that nothing was left in Bihar. However, after Shri Nitish Kumar became the Chief Minister and the NDA Government was formed, focused efforts were undertaken to promote and strengthen the farming community in Bihar. In Bihar, the farmer emerged as the central issue of governance. While the coal mines went to Jharkhand, Bihar resolved to move forward by strengthening agriculture. To this end, the then Hon. Governor inaugurated the Agricultural Road Map. Thereafter, under the leadership of Shri Nitish Kumar, consistent efforts were made to carry out agricultural activities in accordance with this Road Map. Today, Bihar contributes more than 11 Percent to the national GDP. In the production of paddy and wheat, Bihar has surpassed China. The Hon. Prime Minister has honoured Bihar's farmers with awards on four occasions. I am of the view that the initiatives undertaken

by Shri Nitish Kumar to advance Bihar offer valuable lessons, and the Union Government should also draw guidance from these experiences. More recently, Shri Nitish Kumar has launched the Jal, Jeevan, Hariyali scheme. Through this initiative, there is a concerted effort in every district to create awareness among farmers regarding water conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The efforts being made in this direction are now clearly yielding positive results.

Sir, our colleague from Maharashtra was just informing the House that in Maharashtra, over the past three years, nearly 12,000 farmers have committed suicide. Even earlier figures show that 11,379 farmers had taken their own lives. The continuing distress of farmers clearly indicates that, somewhere, greater attention needs to be paid to their concerns. The manner in which we discuss farmers' issues in this House is not translating into tangible benefits for them. The Government continues to make efforts, but when the time for cultivation arrives, when it is time for potato farming, farmers are forced to sell their produce at the rate of Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 per kilogram. Recently, in Nashik, Maharashtra, there was no buyer for onions, yet today the price of onions has risen to Rs. 100 per kilogram. This is a matter that calls for serious reflection. Farmers are continuously striving to find ways to increase their income. Farmers' income must indeed be doubled, but there are inadequate

efforts directed towards how this objective is to be achieved. For doubling farmers' income, it is essential that they receive fertilisers on time and seeds on time. Today, when farmers go to purchase seeds, they receive them only after 15 to 20 days. The unavailability of quality seeds is also a major reason for the distress faced by farmers. In Bihar, farmers' income is steadily declining. When grain is produced and farmers take their produce to the market, they often fail to find buyers for it. This situation further aggravates their hardship.

Sir, in Bihar, along the banks of the Ganga from Buxar to Bhagalpur, Hon. Shri Nitish Kumar has taken a decisive step to enhance agricultural productivity by promoting the use of vermi compost. Concrete efforts are being made in this direction. We would also appeal to the Government of India to extend its full cooperation in this initiative. Under the ongoing Jal, Jeevan, Hariyali scheme, it is equally necessary to work systematically towards managing groundwater resources and reversing the alarming decline in groundwater levels. As long as farmers continue to remain in distress, the progress of the nation cannot be realised. Farmers across the country are not receiving remunerative prices for their produce. We must therefore intensify our efforts to address this issue. The Government should ensure the availability of fertilisers, seeds, pesticides and all other essential agricultural

inputs to farmers at affordable prices. There is also a pressing need to provide sustained subsidies on agricultural machinery and equipment to support farmers and strengthen the agricultural sector.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, agriculture must be recognised on the same footing as industry; only then can the distress of farmers be effectively alleviated. It is essential to ensure that farmers are able to sell their produce at fair and assured prices. At present, they are often forced to deal with middlemen, and measures must be taken to protect them from such exploitation. Last year, Bihar witnessed a substantial production of pulses. However, farmers in the State, particularly those from the Diara region, were unable to obtain fair prices for their crops. Although the Government made efforts to provide remunerative rates, there were simply no buyers willing to purchase the produce.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, if we compare our situation with Maharashtra, it is evident that our management of the onion sector has been completely inadequate. Greater attention must be paid to regulating the activities of middlemen, and hoarders must be identified and brought to account. Only through such measures can we hope to effectively alleviate the distress of farmers. Furthermore, proper storage facilities for fruits and vegetables must be ensured nationwide. If the Government establishes an efficient

storage system, it will significantly curb the exploitative practices of middlemen and large-scale hoarders.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, it is absolutely essential for farmers that food processing units are established at various locations, enabling them to sell their produce at fair and remunerative prices. Equally important is providing farmers with timely weather information to protect them from the vagaries of nature, which can help reduce unexpected losses. Today, it is necessary to adopt a scientific approach to agriculture, and for this, the Government must take a proactive role. There has been discussion about solar pumps, but their high cost prevents them from reaching the farmers. The Government should provide solar pumps to farmers free of cost and offer deep-boring machines at a 90 percent subsidy, enabling farmers to install tube wells as well. With these measures, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Thank you Chairperson Sir. I stand here today to deliberate on the subject that is actually being discussed throughout the country today. I would start with my State Odisha which has repeatedly been affected by natural calamities, be it floods, cyclone or drought. After the devastating super cyclone of 1999, Odisha has developed OSDMA which has rendered a remarkable service to the affected people who were affected by floods and cyclone. Farmers face the brunt of these natural calamities.

Before I deal with the crop loss and its impact on farmers, we should ask ourselves, who is a farmer? What is the Government's definition of a farmer and how many farmers are there in India by that definition? As there is an ambiguity in Government circle, it has its own implication on the design and beneficiaries of the schemes meant to help them including the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. The Government of India provides income support to all farmer families who own cultivable land, but the number of land holdings do not necessarily equate with the number of farming households. What does Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Committee say? It says and I quote:

“The term ‘FARMER’ refers to a person engaged in the economic and/or livelihood activity of growing crops and producing other primary agricultural commodities, cultivators, agricultural workers, sharecroppers, tenants as well as persons engaged in various farming related occupations.”

16.00 hrs

“...It also includes tribal families/persons engaged in shifting cultivation and in collection, use and sale of minor and non-timber forests produce. ”

Therefore, should we limit ourselves only to those farmers, who are land owners? PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi does that. Those who are land owners are only getting the benefit. I am reminded of this year’s Noble Laureate, Michael Kremer though nobody talks about him in our country. I am reminded of this year’s Nobel Laureate, Michael Kremer, who is less discussed in the elite circles of this country. From Gujarat cotton farmers to coffee growers of Karnataka and paddy farmers of Odisha, the Research of 2019 Economics, Nobel Laureate Mr. Kremer and the company he founded, has impacted the lives of more than six lakh agriculturists in India. Randomised controlled trials, the research for which the Nobel was awarded, showed that a low-cost mobile phone-based agriculture consulting service, developed by Dr. Kremer’s

company, led to an annual income growth of about Rs. 7,000 per farmer.

Dr. Kremer's fellow awardees – Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee – have well-documented personal and professional links to India. For the third awardee, the biggest India connection comes *via* Precision Agriculture for Development, the non-profit organisation he co-founded in 2016 along with three others including fellow Harvard professor Shawn Cole. Precision Agriculture for Development, India began work with 2,000 cotton farmers in Gujarat in 2016, and now reaches six lakh farmers across the country with the biggest contingent of 5.25 lakh coming from Odisha. When farmers could call a helpline for real-time expert advice on sowing and irrigation decisions, and inputs such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticide, yields rose to a very high percentage.

16.02 hrs

(Shri Kodikunnil Suresh *in the Chair*)

I would urge upon the Government to make conscious efforts to empower the farmers through this modern technology so that the income of farmers will grow. Sir, I should say that in 2019, Odisha has faced devastating cyclones, that is, Cyclone Fani in May and Cyclone Bulbul in November. Due to Cyclone Fani, the total crop affected is around 1.82 lakh hectares. It affected 12 districts of Odisha and damaged 1.46 lakh hectares of crop. Funds that were

allocated to the districts for disbursement of agricultural input subsidies for crop loss till date, is Rs. 117.37 crore as per SDRF-NDRF Norms.

Disbursement of agricultural input subsidies is going on. In addition to agricultural input subsidies, the State Government provided Rs. 50 crore from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for Assistance to affected coconut growers. Other supports are also being provided to the affected farmers in horticulture sector. Due to Cyclone Bulbul, coastal districts of Odisha have been affected to a large extent. Standing crops fell flat in the field. More than 2.2 hectaress of crop was damaged in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack and Mayurbhanj Districts.

Agricultural input subsidies from crop loss was estimated to be Rs. 151.98 crore as per SDRF-NDRF Norms. But we have not yet received a single pie from the Union Government. Day before yesterday, Rs. 550 crore have been provided for SDRF share. Sir, I would now come to the issue of crop insurance.

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, if I may say so, is the fourth *avatar* of crop insurance. I need not go into the history of crop insurance in India which goes back to 1915 when Shri J.S. Chakravarti, Finance Secretary of Mysore State, proposed a rain insurance scheme. Repeated attempts have been made to improve

it. The C&AG has given its reports. The Finance Committee has given its report. The action taken notes have also been submitted in this House. Between 2011 to 2015-16, in these five years, only 14 per cent and 22 per cent of the total farmers were covered under insurance, which means, 78 per cent to 86 per cent of farmers were outside the insurance coverage. The small and marginal farmers' case was worse. It was only 5.75 per cent to 13.32 per cent coverage, which means, 86 per cent to 94 per cent were uninsured.

Did the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana improve the situation? The Government may say so but a reply to an RTI question revealed that 11 insurance firms paid claims worth Rs. 31,602.72 crore against gross premiums of Rs. 47,407.98 crore they had received in two years, in 2016 and 2017-18. What is the profit? It is Rs. 15,995 crore from Fasal Bima Yojana. This is the profit which the insurance sector has received within a period of two years. This means, a pay-out of Rs. 50 to the insurance companies for every benefit worth Rs. 100 to the farmer. A little arithmetic calculation which I had done has come to this. Are you considering bringing in reforms? Are you considering reducing the role of private insurance?

I was going through the figure relating to 30 districts of Odisha of last three years. This demonstrates how much loss the farmers are making because they are insuring their crops for the benefit.

Anyone who takes a loan from a cooperative society or a bank has to insure his crop. That is compulsory and it has become like this.

Here, I would speak about another aspect relating to Fasal Bima Yojana. The Government has entrusted this job to the respective State Governments to take a decision about which are the districts and who will be the private insurer. We had tried to give such suggestions through the Finance Committee that that private insurance company should be in that district for, at least, three consecutive years. Otherwise, what is happening is that one insurance company is there in my district for this year and next year, when actually the problem starts, we do not know where that insurance company is. He has been shifted to another. Even if he is blacklisted, he goes to another State and does his business. That should be stopped. This type of guideline can be given by the Union Government or by the respective Ministry. Whoever you are engaging, at least, engage him for three consecutive years.

Is the Government not aware that farmers are paying about Rs. 15,000 crore in GST annually? One would ask where would the farmers be paying GST? Why would they pay GST for this? This is a calculation. If the House decides, I can give it in detail but I would limit that. Let us probe, what input cost a farmer is incurring, on which they cannot claim input tax credit.

GST is something where input tax credit can be recovered. But farmer is paying 5 per cent GST on fertilizer, 5 to 12 per cent GST on botanicals and biologicals, 12 per cent GST on tractors, 12 per cent GST on pumps, 12 per cent GST on drip and sprinkler system, 12 per cent GST on farm implements, 18 per cent GST on pesticides, 18 per cent GST on pheromone traps, and 18 per cent GST on pesticide safety kits. That is how the farmers are being pauperised. It is because they are paying GST. What we need is a scheme which makes the public expenditure efficacious and which increases the farmers' incomes. A mechanism to compensate farmers in the event of loss due to crop failure, bad weather, pests, or any other reason and more so from adverse market conditions is imperative. This calls for the Government's will and a vision to ensure income and employment security of the farmers and food security of the people.

Odisha is giving some support to farmers through KALIA scheme, so also Telangana, West Bengal, Karnataka, other than the PM Kisan Nidhi. But that is not sufficient. Now, KALIA has been subsumed with the PM Kisan Nidhi. It is a good thing that the Odisha Government has done for the benefit of the farmers of Odisha.

Lastly, I would bring to the notice of the Minister and also of the Government an unequal burden that is imposed on farmers. Farmers are paying, as I said, about Rs.15,000 crore as GST annually on which they are unable to claim input tax credit. Though this does not directly deal with the subject that is being deliberated today. I thought to keep the Government alert on this subject which I may discuss in a bit detail later on if I am allowed to speak. Government needs to support the farmers. They are the food suppliers, the *annadata*. All steps should be taken to compensate their loss and they should not be fleeced. Thank you, Sir.

[Translation]

KUNWAR DANISH ALI (AMROHA): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this discussion on the challenges faced by farmers. In reality, India resides in its villages, in its fields and farms. Yet, the unfortunate truth is that even after so many years of independence, we have done very little for our farmers. I firmly believe that until the Government frames its economic policies with the farmer, the village, and the fields at the very centre, the farmers of this country cannot be truly prosperous. Too often, this fundamental truth is overlooked. Earlier, a Hon. Member from the ruling side was speaking and mocked some Opposition Members, saying, “What do you know about farming?” If I may respond, I do know what farming is. True farming is not something a feudal landlord can claim to understand merely by riding a horse. Do you know what farming truly is? The Prime Minister’s Crop Insurance Scheme has been introduced merely to generate profits for corporate houses and insurance companies. Hon. Mahtab has just cited figures on how many farmers have benefited. I would like to urge that these figures be laid on the Table. Hon. Chairperson, how many farmers have actually benefited from the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana? Sir, the answer is effectively none. This scheme has, in practice, become a policy that serves only corporate houses and insurance companies.

I was reviewing the scheme in my district during a Disha meeting and asked how many farmers had availed insurance. Hon. Chairperson, only those farmers who approach the bank for a crop loan are eligible for insurance, as it has been made mandatory that crop insurance must be obtained to avail a loan. Yet, when I inquired how many farmers actually received compensation, it emerged that not a single farmer had received any benefit.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to bring to your attention that the Government claims every farmer is receiving Rs. 6,000 and loudly asserts that even if there are six names in the Khatauni, the scheme applies. It is quite possible that the persons whose names appear may not even know what a Khasra or a Khatauni is. But I, Danish Ali, understand exactly what a Khasra is and what a Khatauni is. We all know this because we have been raised in farming families and continue to practise agriculture even today, and I say this with pride. However, what the authorities are doing amounts merely to creating a perception. We are insisting that the money must reach the farmer directly. The Government provides Rs. 2,000 every quarter, totalling Rs. 6,000 per year for each farmer. But how many farmers actually receive this amount is another matter, and I do not wish to enter into that debate here. Even today, in my constituency, farmers are running from bank to bank. They tell me, “Sir, there is a ‘ ₹ .’ in your name in the Khatauni, but your

Aadhaar card does not include the ‘₹.’; therefore, the payment will not be made.”

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to bring to your attention the ground reality and the manner in which farmers are treated. If a farmer takes a loan of Rs. 10,000 to sow his crop and is unable to repay it on time, the Tehsildar has him taken away in a jeep and confined in a lock-up. Yet, if someone like Nirav Modi or a large corporate house misappropriates thousands of crores of rupees, no action is taken against them. I am not saying this out of any political prejudice. I speak of the reality that affects all of us. Regardless of which Government is in power, farmers in this country have repeatedly been subjected to neglect and unequal treatment.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I come from Uttar Pradesh. What is the condition of sugarcane farmers there? Is there any other business in which we produce goods, manufacture products, or grow crops, yet have no say in determining their price? This injustice is faced only by farmers. Even today, in Uttar Pradesh, a farmer works tirelessly throughout the year to cultivate sugarcane, and still has to wait anxiously to learn what price he will receive for his produce. Over 25 percent of the sugarcane has been supplied to sugar mills, yet the Government has still not fixed the price. How many farmers actually manage to sell their sugarcane to the mills? Sir, more than

half of the sugarcane ends up with private crushers, and frequently it is sold at even less than half the proper price.

Hon. Chairperson, it is often stated that the Government will procure paddy and wheat, but the reality of how much is actually procured is well known to all of us. Perhaps we should also recognise the difficulties faced by real farmers, especially small farmers. In the elections prior to 2014, the ruling party had promised to increase farmers' income by one and a half times. We all know the manner in which input costs are determined. I must state honestly, Hon. Minister, you are present here, that if a proper and honest formula were prepared to calculate costs, and if the Government ensured transparency in procurement, no farmer would face distress. Yet, dishonesty in dealing with farmers has persisted from the very first day. The Government officials who determine farmers' costs and input expenses are often complicit in dishonest practices. This is not a hidden fact, everyone is aware of it. We have come here to bring attention to the hardships faced by the common farmer. I have spoken about the sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh. During the BSP Government, when the esteemed sister Shrimati Mayawati served as Chief Minister, sugarcane prices were raised more than at any other time in the history of Uttar Pradesh. But what is the situation today?

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to make just one point. A Member who spoke before me mentioned that farmers also pay GST, but they have no mechanism to reclaim it. How many counterfeit medicines do farmers end up buying from the market? How much fake fertiliser do they purchase? Clearly, much needs to be done to address these issues. In my region of Western Uttar Pradesh, most farming relies on tube wells. Earlier, electricity bills were fixed according to the horsepower of the pump, but now even that system has been altered. Today, if a farmer switches on even a single light on his tube well, he is required to pay an additional bill for it.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make just this point. If, by their definition, a farmer in the village has so much money that he must stand in line at the bank to deposit it, then why does the RBI claim, falsely, that the banks are empty? If, by their definition, the slowdown in the automobile sector is invisible to them, yet they observe traffic jams on empty roads, then only God can say what will become of this country's economy if such definitions continue to guide policy.

Hon. Members from the ruling party were just saying that, "Sir, you are not seeing it; the roads are full of vehicles wherever you go." But whose vehicles are they? Are they the farmers' vehicles? I would like to say this, do not mock the farmers in this

manner. Do not make the farmers' suffering worse by mocking them or speaking insensitively about their hardships. In a country where 31 farmers commit suicide every day, you should feel ashamed of mocking them by claiming that farmers have so much money that they stand in line inside banks. You are ridiculing them by suggesting that they have so many vehicles that roads are congested. Many farmers do not even have enough money to fill diesel in their tractors, and yet you mock them in this manner.

Hon. Chairperson, I do not wish to take up much of your time. I would like to make just one final point regarding farming. I will conclude by saying that the farmer's real cash crop is livestock. When a farmer faces a crisis, he often sells the animals in his household, be it a buffalo or a bull, at the market to buy seeds and fertiliser for sowing, or to arrange for his daughter's marriage. But what has happened today? I will take an example from my region in Uttar Pradesh: even the animal markets are being neglected and allowed to deteriorate by the Government. Where is this country heading? Where is the farmer supposed to turn, and from whom should he seek support? Through you, I would like to issue a caution to the Government. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture is present here; I know he too comes from a farming family. He must feel this pain, and I can appreciate the constraints he faces, because government policies continue to favour corporate interests. Farmers

are given only slogans, while their votes are sought in return. With these words, I hope the Government will take meaningful action to address the problems faced by farmers. I sincerely thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

کے کسانوں مجھے نے آپ صاحب، چیرمین جناب، (امروہ) علی دانش کنور آپ میں لئے کے اس دیا موقع لئے کے لینے حصہ میں بحث اس رہی ہو پر مسائل کھیتوں ہے، بستا میں گاؤوں میں اصلیت ہندوستان ہوں۔ چاہتا کرنا ادا شکریہ کا سال اتنے کے آزادی کہ ہے یہ بات کی افسوس لیکن ہے۔ بستا میں کھلیانوں اور کہ ہے ماننا یہ میرا ہیں۔ پائیں کر نہیں خاص کچھ لئے کے کسانوں لوگ ہم بھی بعد نیوکلیس کو کھلیانوں اور کھیتوں کو، گاؤں کو، کسانوں میں ملک اس ہم تک جب کسان کا ملک اس تک تب گی، بنائے نہیں نیتیاں آرتھک اپنی سرکار کر رکھ میں مجھ ابھی۔ ہیں جاتے بھول یہ کہیں نہ کہیں لوگ ہم ہے۔ سکتا ہو نہیں حال خوش ہوں کسان میں تھے کہ رہے کر تقریر ممبر معزز ایک کے پارٹی رولنگ پہلے سے کسان کی کہ پتہ کیا کو آپ تھے کہ رہے بنا مکھول کا ممبران کچھ کے اپوزیشن اور کی گھوڑے ہے، جو کسان ہے۔ ہوتی کیا کسان کہ ہوں جانتا میں ہے؟ ہوتی کیا کسان ہے معلوم کو آپ ہے۔ سکتا کہہ نہیں کسان کو آپ اپنے فیوڈل کر کے سوای آپ لئے کے دینے منافعہ کو کمپنیوں کو، انشورینس کارپوریٹس خالی ہے؟ ہوتی کیا ہیں دئیے آنکڑے ابھی نے صاحب مہتاب ہیں۔ لاتے یوجنا بیما فصل منتری پردھان چیرمین جناب رکھئیے۔ پر پٹل سبھا یہاں آپ ہے، ہوا فائدہ کو کسانوں کتنے کہ جناب، ہے؟ ہوا فائدہ کو کسانوں کتنے سے یوجنا بیما فصل منتری پردھان صاحب، پہنچانے فائدہ کو کمپنیز انشورینس اور کو ہاؤسز کارپوریٹ صرف نہیں کچھ یہ رہا کر ریویو میں ضلع اپنے میں بیٹھک کی شاد ابھی میں ہے۔ ہوئی ثابت نیتی کی

ان صرف محترم، ہے۔ کروایا انشیورینس نے کسانوں کتنے پوچھا نے میں تھا۔ جاتا لینے قرض لئے کے فصل سے بینک کسان جو ہے ہوتا انشیورینس کا کسانوں کا فصل اپنی کو آپ تو گے لیں لون کروپ آپ اگر ہے کہ گیا کر دیا مینڈیٹری یہ ہے۔ معاوضہ کا اس کو کسانوں کتنے کہ پوچھا نے میں جب لیکن گا۔ پڑے کروانا بیما ہے۔ ملتا نہیں معاوضہ کو کسان کسی تو ملا

نے سرکار کو کسان کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا اتنا سے آپ میں صاحب، چیرمین جناب کہ کہا کر کے کلیم سے زور بڑے ہے اور رہا مل روپیے ہزار 6 کو کسان ہر کہ کہا تھے، رہے لے وہ نام کا شخص جس کہ ہے سکتا ہو ہیں بھی نام 6 اگر میں کھتونی ہوتا کیا خسرا کہ ہے جانتا علی دانش لیکن ہوگی، معلوم نہیں کھتونی خسرا کو ان پلے میں پریوار کسان ہم کیونکہ ہیں جانتے سب ہم ہے۔ ہوتی کیا کھتونی اور ہے آپ لیکن۔ ہوں کہتا کو بات اس سے فخر میں ہیں، کرتے کسان بھی آج ہم اور ہیں دیجیئے، کو کسان آپ کہ ہیں رہے کہ ہم ہیں۔ کرتے کرنیٹ پرسپیشن صرف لوگ رہے دے کو کسان روپیے ہزار 6 کا سال ہیں، رہے دے تیماہی روپیے ہزار 2 آپ چاہتا جانا نہیں میں بحث اس میں ہے، رہا مل کو کسانوں کتنے میں اس اب ہیں۔ کہ ہیں کہتے وہ ہیں۔ رہے کاٹ چکر کے بینک کسان بھی آج یہاں میرے ہوں۔ کارڈ ادھار کے آپ ہے، ہوئی لگی ماترا کی ڈا میں نام کے آپ میں کھتونی صاحب، گا۔ ملے نہیں لئے اس ہے، نہیں ماترا کی ڈا۔ میں

سے اس کو آپ میں ہے سچائی جو پر سطح زمینی صاحب، چیرمین محترم ایک ہے۔ جاتا کیا برتاؤ ساتھ کے کسانوں سے طریقے کس کہ ہوں چاہتا کرانا واقف وقت وہ اور ہے لیتا قرض کا روپیے ہزار دس لئے کے ہونے فصل اپنی اگر کسان ہے، دیتا کر بند میں جیل کر بیٹھا میں جیپ کو اس دار تحصیل تو ہے دیتا نہیں پر

روپئے کروڑوں ہزاروں ہاؤس کارپوریٹ بڑا کوئی یا مودی نیرو کوئی اگر لیکن یہ ہے۔ ہوتی نہیں کاروائی پر اس ہے، ہوتا نہیں کچھ کا اس جائے تو چلا کر لوٹ کہہ میں بارے کے سب میں یہ ہوں۔ رہا کہہ نہیں سے دُربھاونہ سیاسی کسی میں میں ملک اس ساتھ کے کسان لیکن ہوں رہیں بھی کی کسی سرکاری کہ ہوں رہا ہے۔ رہا ہوتا برتاؤ سوتیلا

کیا کا کسانوں گنا وہاں ہوں۔ آتا سے پردیش اتر میں صاحب، چیرمین محترم رہے کر پیدا چیز کوئی اپنی ہم میں جس ہے، کاروبار ایسا کوئی تک آج ہے؟ حال قیمت کی سے ہم ہیں، رہے بنا پروڈکٹ بھی کچھ اپنا ہیں، رہے بنا گاڑی اپنی ہیں، سال کسان میں پردیش اتر آج ہے کہ ہوتا ساتھ کے کسان صاف یہ کریں؟ نہ طے کہ ہے رہا تاک مہنہ بھی آج کر اگا گنا کر کے کھیتی بھی سال کر کے مزدوری بھر گیا، دیا دے کو ملوں چینی گنا زیادہ سے فیصد 25 ہوگا۔ کیا بھاؤ کا گنے میرے گنا کا کسانوں کتنے ہے۔ کی نہیں طے قیمت کی گنے نے سرکار تک ابھی لیکن ہے جاتا کو کریشرس پرائیوٹ گنا زیادہ سے آدھے جناب، ہے؟ جاتا تک ملوں چینی ہے۔ جاتا نہیں بھی پر نام آدھے اور

کی دھان سرکار کہ ہے جاتا کہا لئے کے پروکیورمینٹ صاحب، چیرمین یہ ہے ہوتی خریداری کتنی لیکن گی، کرے خریداری کی گیہوں گی، کرے خریداری پریشانیوں کن کو اس ہے، کسان چھوٹا جو ہیں، کسان اصلی جو ہیں۔ جانتے سب ہم 2014 میں چناؤں پچھلے چاہئے۔ ہونا معلوم ہمیں یہ شاید ہے، پڑتا کرنا سامنا کا دیں کر گنا ڈیڑھ آمدنی کی کسانوں ہم کہ کیا اعلان یہ نے پارٹی سرکاری پہلے سے میں ہے، جاتی کی طے کاسٹ پٹ ان سے طریقے کس کہ ہیں جانتے سب ہم گے، ہیں بیٹھے پر یہاں جی منتری مآب عزت کہ کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا یہ سے ایمانداری تو سرکار اور جائے ہو طے فارمولہ کا کرنے طے لاگت صرف سے ایمانداری اگر کے کسان لیکن ہوگا۔ نہیں پریشان کسان کوئی تو آئے لے شفافیت میں خریداری

طے لاگت کی کسان ملازم سرکاری جو ہے۔ ہوتی ہی سے دن پہلے ایمان بے ساتھ سب ہے۔ جاتی کرائی ایمانی بے سے ان ہیں، کرتے طے کاسٹ پٹ ان ہیں، کرتے کسان عام ہیں۔ جانتے سب ہم یہ ہے۔ نہیں بات ہوئی چھپی کوئی یہ مطلب ہیں بتاتے بارے کے کسانوں گنا کے پردیش اتر نے میں ہیں۔ آئے رکھنے یہاں ہم درد دکھ کا تھیں۔ اعلیٰ وزیر جی مایاوتی بہن مآب عزت تھی، سرکار کی بی۔ ایس۔ پی۔ کہا۔ میں تو گئے بڑھائے دام کے کسانوں گنا اگر میں تاریخ کی پردیش اتر زیادہ سے سب ہے؟ حال کیا آج۔ گئے بڑھائے میں دور کے اعلیٰ وزیر کے جی مایاوتی کماری بہن

میرے یہاں ابھی کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا ہی اتنا صرف سے آپ میں صاحب، چیرمین دیتا کسان بھی ٹی۔ جی۔ ایس۔ کہ کہا نے انہوں تھے۔ رہے بول ممبر معزز پہلے سے نقلی کتنی کرے۔ ری۔ کلیم کو اس کہ ہے نہیں چارہ کوئی پاس کے کسان لیکن ہے، کرنے کی کچھ بہت ہے۔ خریدتا کھاد نقلی کتنی ہے، خریدتا سے بازار کسان دوائیاں کے ذریعہ ویل ٹیوب کسانی تر زیادہ میں پردیش اتر مغربی یہاں میرے ہے۔ ضرورت اب لیکن گا، آئے اتنا بل کا پاور ہارس اتنے کہ تھا طے پہلے بجلی، ہے۔ ہوتی سے کا لائٹ ایک اوپر کے ویل ٹیوب اپنے کسان اگر ہے۔ گئی کردی تبدیلی بھی میں اس گا۔ پڑے دینا سے الگ بل کا اس تو گا جلانے بھی بلب

کی ان اگر کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا ہی اتنا صرف سے آپ میں صاحب، چیرمین کرنے جمع میں بینکوں وہ کہ ہے پیسہ اتنا پاس کے کسان کے گاؤں میں پریبھاشا بینکس ہے کہ رہی بول کیوں جھوٹ آئی۔ آر۔ بی۔ پھر تو ہے کھڑا میں لائن لٹے کے دے نہیں دکھائی کو ان ڈاؤن سلو کا موبائل آٹو میں پریبھاشا کی ان اگر ہیں۔ خالی مالک ہی والا اوپر پھر تو ہے رہا دے دکھائی جام ٹریفک پر سڑکوں خالی ہے، رہا ۔ بے کی ان پریبھاشا یہیں اگر ہوگا؟ حال کیا کا ایکونامی کی ملک اس کہ ہے

دکھائی کو آپ صاحب کہ تھے رہے کہہ ممبران کے جماعت حکمران ابھی گاڑیاں کی کن وہ بھائی اے ہیں۔ گاڑیاں ہی گاڑیاں نکلو پر سڑک جس ، رہا دے نہیں مت ایسے مذاق کا کسانوں کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا میں ہیں؟ گاڑیاں کی کسانوں ہیں، روز میں ملک جس کیجیے۔ مت کام کا چھڑکنے نمک پر زخموں کے ان آپ اڑائیے۔ اڑا مذاق کا ان آپ کہ چاہئیے آئی شرم کو آپ ہوں، رہے کر کُشی خود کسان 31 کھڑے کر لگا لائن اندر کے بینک وہ کہ ہے پیسہ اتنا پاس کے کسانوں کہ ہیں رہے پر سڑکوں کہ ہیں گاڑیاں اتنی پاس کے کسانوں کہ ہیں رہے اڑا مذاق کا ان آپ ہیں۔ لئے کے لوانے ڈٹیزل میں ٹریکٹر اپنے پاس کے کسانوں ہیں۔ رہے لگا جام وہ ہیں۔ رہے اڑا مذاق ایسے کا ان آپ اور ہے نہیں پیسہ

صرف میں ہوں۔ چاہتا لینا نہیں وقت زیادہ کا آپ میں صاحب، چیرمین محترم گا کروں ختم بات اپنی کر کہہ بات ایک میں ہیں، جو کسان کہ ہوں چاہتا کہنا ہی اتنا اپنے وہ ہے آتی مصیبت پر کسان جب جانور۔ ہے ہوتی کروپس کیش کی کسان کہ ہے، ہوتا بھینسا یا ہے ہوتی بھینس یہاں کے اس ہیں، ہوتے جانور جو کے گھر ہے یا لاتا کھاد اور بیچ لئے کے بوائی کی کھیتی کر بیچ کر جالے میں بازار کو اس پردیش اتر میں ہے، گیا ہو کیا آج لیکن۔ ہے کرتا ایسا لئے کے شادی کی بیٹی اپنی کام کا اُجاڑنے بھی بازار کے جانوروں ک ہوں رہا دے مثال ایک کی حلقہ اپنے میں کس جائیں، کہاں کسان ہیں؟ رہے جالے کو ملک اس کہاں یہ ہے۔ رہے کر سرکار ، ہوں چاہتا چیتانا ہی اتنا کو سرکار سے ذریعہ کے آپ میں مانگیں؟ بھیک سے پریوار کسان بھی وہ کہ ہوں جانتا میں ہیں، بیٹھے یہاں زراعت وزیر مآب عزت سکتا سمجھ میں بھی مجبوریاں کی ان لیکن ہوگا، درد بالکل کو ان ہیں۔ آتے سے جملہ صرف کو کسان ہے۔ میں فیور کے کارپوریٹ نیتی کی سرکار کیونکہ ہوں، رہئیے۔ کرتے حاصل ووٹ کا ان اور دیجیئے

گی۔ دے دھیان کچھ پر مسائل کے کسانوں سرکار کہ ساتھ کے الفاظ انہیں میں
شکریہ بہت بہت دیا۔ موقع کا بولنے مجھے نے آپ

(شد ختم)

[English]

ADV. A.M. ARIFF (ALAPPUZHA): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this burning issue of Indian farmers. I appreciate the present Chair for drawing the attention of this august House to the issue of crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers.

Our country is passing through a huge farm distress that is breaking the backbone of our economy. Natural reasons and manmade reasons are responsible for this. Natural reasons include flood, drought, cyclone, diseases affecting the crop etc., but I feel that manmade reasons are worsening the situation. Sadly, the Government policies are aggravating the farm distress. Prices are soaring up, but the farmer is still living in poverty.

The anti-farmer policy of this Government is crushing our farmers ruthlessly. They have only one option and that is to end their lives. The electricity charges, unfair import policies and fertiliser prices are responsible for this. At the same time, inflation is also going up every day.

The Prime Minister had announced his plan to double farmers' income at a Kisan Rally in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh on February 28, 2016, but the real picture of an Indian farmer is there for all to see. Agriculture in India is a death game. It is shocking that over 12,000

farmers in Maharashtra committed suicide in three years. The recent National Sample Survey on the assessment of farmers' situation says 40 per cent of farmers would like to quit agriculture.

Crop failure is recurring every year either due to drought or due to flood or other climatic reasons. What is the fate of this Government's much publicised Crop Insurance Scheme? Insurance companies, under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, have missed the deadline to recognise and pay claims worth over Rs. 5,000 crore made by the farmers. Their failure to deliver crop insurance claims has further aggravated the farm distress. The Government is fooling the farmers. They are only a vote bank for them.

The failure to tackle the middleman is another major issue and there has been an utter failure of the Government in this regard. They have a very powerful lobby and in most cases, goons are acting as middlemen. As a result, 90 per cent of the profit is looted by these middlemen. The Government has taken no initiative to eliminate the system of middleman. Today, the price of onion has touched Rs. 160 or above, but not a single farmer is going to get that price.

The Kerala farm sector is facing different challenges due to climatic variations and unfair import policies of the Central

Government. In 2016, farmers in Kerala were fighting the worst drought in 115 years. In 2018 and 2019, it had to face two floods, which was unheard of in Kerala's history. Agriculture in Kerala is struggling to overcome these challenges.

Raising minimum support prices, providing insurance covers against natural calamities and writing off large amounts of accumulated farm debts are temporary respites to the distressed farmers.

In Kerala, the farmers of 60 years and above are getting Rs. 1,300 every month. Thousands of hectares of land has become unuseable due to wide-spread landslides. Kerala State had requested for Rs. 2,101 crore, but the Centre refused to provide even a single rupee of the Emergency Relief Fund.

A permanent solution to the farm sector can be achieved only through the policy measures that would make agriculture a sustainable business. The Budget can extend fiscal incentives to set up better infrastructure that would minimise post-harvest losses of food grains, fruits, vegetables and other farm produce. Sir, with this, I conclude my speech and thank you.

SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO (KHAMMAM): Mr. Speaker sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers. [Translation] Sir, many Members have spoken in this House today. For a variety of reasons, the farmer faces constant hardship. These difficulties are not caused by one or two factors alone. If there is a flood, the farmer struggles; if there is a drought, the farmer struggles. Similarly, as some Hon. Members have pointed out, in many areas farmers do not have access to electricity. The absence of electricity adds to their difficulties. If they do not receive seeds on time, the farmer struggles; if timely fertilisers are not provided, the farmer struggles; if loans from banks are delayed, the farmer struggles. Even after overcoming all these challenges, when the farmer brings his produce to the market and does not receive the support price, he continues to struggle. It is for these multiple reasons that the farmers of India face continuous hardship.

In the six years since the formation of the State of Telangana, we have taken steps to support farmers in a manner that, to the best of my knowledge, no other State in India has undertaken. Most notably, we provide farmers in our State with free electricity, 24 hours a day. No other State in the country offers such a facility. Yet in Telangana, under the leadership of our Chief Minister, Shri Chandrashekhar Rao, farmers receive electricity round the clock at

absolutely no cost. In this way, we have ensured that farmers have uninterrupted access to free electricity.

In addition, for the first time in India, our Chief Minister has provided each farmer with Rs. 10,000 per acre under the 'Rythu Bandhu' scheme. Providing Rs. 10,000 per acre is no small measure. For instance, a farmer with six acres receives Rs. 60,000. After observing this initiative, the Prime Minister has also begun providing Rs. 6,000 per farmer across the country. Hon. Chairperson, what we wish to emphasise is this, at present, a farmer receives only Rs. 6,000. Even if he is a small farmer with five or six acres, he still receives the same amount. By contrast, in Telangana, a farmer with six acres receives Rs. 60,000. We therefore urge that farmers across the country be provided Rs. 10,000 per acre instead of Rs. 6,000. Such a measure would be of immense benefit to them. Since the introduction of this scheme in our State, small farmers have been able to sustain their cultivation. Earlier, farmers with bank loans were often forced either to sell their land or, in extreme cases, to take their own lives. With this support, our small farmers are now able to retain and manage their fields; they no longer have to sell their land. This is a matter of critical importance. As we discuss the welfare of farmers in this House today, the Government should seriously consider providing Rs. 10,000 per acre to ensure the economic security and survival of farmers across the country.

Telangana is situated at a higher elevation, and farmers there were facing severe difficulties due to a lack of water. Nowhere else in the world has such an initiative been undertaken, yet we have implemented the Kaleshwaram Project, lifting water from the entire Godavari River to supply it directly to farmers. I would like to bring this to the attention of the Hon. Minister. As we have mentioned earlier in this House, farmers across the country require 40,000 TMC of water. At present, 17,000 TMC of water flows unused into the sea every year. If this water were properly channelled to farmers, there would still be a surplus of 30,000 TMC. You may have observed previous proposals regarding river linking. If river linking projects are implemented immediately, every farmer in the country will have access to water. Hon. Chairperson, I would like to request just two minutes of your time. We are the sons of farmers. While speaking on matters concerning farmers, I would like to request that the bell not be rung. Our position is simple: farmers should have access to water, electricity, and timely bank loans. We urge this Government to expedite the completion of river linking projects. If these projects are implemented, every farmer will have access to water. Just as we have a national electricity grid and a national highway grid, a water grid should be established for farmers. This is the way to safeguard and sustain our farmers.

In addition, we must also pay attention to commercial crops. Our country currently imports Rs. 50,000 crore worth of palm oil. At the same time, farmers should be supported in establishing palm oil plantations. Farmers in Andhra Pradesh also cultivate palm oil, but they do not receive a fair price for their produce, which creates significant difficulties. The Government should therefore provide proper support to farmers in the cultivation of commercial crops, particularly palm oil.

Sir, several Hon. Members in this House have spoken about sugar and sugarcane. Farmers should be ensured fair prices for sugarcane. In this regard, we wish to thank the Government for providing a favourable rate for ethanol, which helps to partially offset the losses incurred by sugar mills. Furthermore, we suggest that it would be beneficial if sugar mills set up power plants. The Government should also provide a fair rate for biomass. If such measures are implemented, farmers will receive a substantial income. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude now.

[Translation]

SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO: Sir, I shall conclude my remarks in two minutes. In addition, the Government must give due

attention to food processing. Today, farmers produce chilli, cotton, and wheat, but by the time these reach the consumer, numerous intermediaries are involved, which consistently disadvantages our farmers. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on developing food processing. I also would like to suggest that the Government recognise that farmers in each State face distinct issues, which must be addressed in a manner tailored to their specific needs.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Nama Nageswara Rao ji, please come to the last point.

SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO: Sir, only minute please, I am concluding. [Translation] I would like to advise the Government to formulate a comprehensive Indian Farmers' Policy, taking into account the specific issues faced by farmers in each State. Through such a policy, support can be extended to every Indian farmer. In developed countries, farmers travel by car. How long are our Indian farmers expected to continue walking on foot? This starkly illustrates the difficulties they face in comparison to farmers elsewhere. With these observations, I would like to conclude my remarks and thank you for the time kindly allotted to me. I would like to urge that due attention be given to the points we have raised.

Our Hon. Minister is genuinely concerned for the welfare of farmers, and I therefore request that, following this discussion, the Government take concrete steps to resolve the challenges faced by our farmers. Thank you.

[English]

***SHRI SUNIL DATTATRAY TATKARE (RAIGAD):** I am thankful to you for allowing me to speak on this important issue related to our farmers. India is an agrarian country but we are not serious of farmers' issues. Agrarian Revolution was started by Lal Bahadur Shastriji by giving the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' and in our Maharashtra it was stated by Hon'ble Yashwantrao Chavanji during his regime. Hon'ble Yashwantrao Chavanji was the Minister in the Ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs and Finance and he served the national wholeheartedly.

During Lok Sabha elections we had been promised that the farmers will get remunerative price for agricultural produce which would be 1.5 times more than the production cost. We had also been assured to implement the recommendations of Dr. Swaminathan Commission. This Commission was set up when Hon'ble Sharad Pawarji was the Agriculture Minister of this country. MSP should be hiked and revised every year.

I am also a paddy grower and paddy is the main crop in Konkan region. During the Atal Behari Vajpayee Regime, the MSP for paddy is fixed at the rate of Rs.450 per quintal. But when Sharad Pawarji took over the charge of Agriculture Ministry, he revised it

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

to Rs.1450 per quintal. Rs.1000 quintal is hiked during the period in these ten years. Unfortunately, during the last 5 years MSP is not revised. We are talking only about paying Rs.6000 per year to the farmers. But, the insurance companies are deceiving people in Maharashtra.

Our farmers in Maharashtra are facing hard times due to flood and unseasonal rain. The rich grape growers in Nashik are completely devastated this time and we are completely ruined. So, we should come forward and help them by increasing MSP.

Hon'ble Sharad Pawarji had started Horticulture Mission in Maharashtra in the year 1991 when he was CM of Maharashtra. He had provided employment through horticulture. A farmer has to suffer for years if a horticulture farm gets devastated.

During 2014 Lok Sabha Elections Campaign when Sharad Pawarji found farmers in distress, he called NDRF meeting and helped the poor farmers. All Party MPs are present in this House but nothing has been given to the farmers in Maharashtra. When this kind of natural calamity occurred in South India, we helped the affected fishermen instantly. That kind of immediate help should also be extended to the fishermen of Maharashtra.

Due to the prolonged rains, our fishermen were unable to go into the sea for fishing. Hon'ble Prime Minister himself said that

Sharad Pawarji had helped Gujarati fishermen when they needed it most. Today, farmers of Maharashtra are looking at the centre for urgent help.

During UPA regime, the then Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh had given complete loan waiver to the distressed farmers of India. Hon'ble Pawarji was the Agriculture Minister in his Cabinet. So whether you are going to help them or not that is the question. Whether we are going to save them through the insurance companies or not?

We should increase MSP immediately and Swaminathan Commission Report should also be implemented. Concrete steps should also be taken in this regard.

Today, onion prices are rising high and we are bound to import onions. But in the year 2014, we were exporting all these agricultural produces. Hence, through you, I would like to request Hon'ble Agriculture Minister to help our farmers by providing financial assistance. We must take necessary steps for the welfare of farmers. Lastly, I would like to urge upon you to help the distressed farmers of Maharashtra who had suffered severely due to the flood and unseasonal rain. Thank you very much. Jai Hind. Jai Maharashtra.

[Translation]

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD): Hon. Chairperson, I rise under Rule 193 to speak on the matter of “Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers.” My Parliamentary Constituency is Aurangabad and Gaya in Bihar, which is entirely dependent on agriculture. The economy of my constituency is predominantly agrarian. Being a farmer myself, I am intimately aware of the hardships and challenges faced by farmers. I would like to emphasise that farmers are a remarkable class, endowed with extraordinary patience and resilience. They are tested not only by God and nature but also by administrative systems. At present, stray cattle and wild animals further damage their crops. This is precisely the issue that today’s discussion seeks to address.

I would like to emphasise the hard work and toil of farmers. They are rightly called the providers of food for the nation; they feed the country. Yet, the condition of this class is such that today they endure immense suffering, hardship, and distress. I would like to draw attention to their plight. This is a class of people who, when planting the Kharif crop, work under the scorching sun, enduring the heat to sow their fields. During July and August, when paddy transplantation takes place, they expose themselves to the sun’s harsh rays. When it is time for the wheat crop, they labour through

the freezing nights of December and January, irrigating their fields to ensure the crop grows. Such is the resilience and dedication of this class of people.

I would like to emphasise that losses caused by nature cannot be fully prevented or mitigated by any government, law, system, or administrative mechanism. However, we can provide farmers with the necessary support. We can strengthen them economically so that, even when natural calamities cause unavoidable losses, they are able to recover and restore their livelihoods. Effective compensation for crop losses by the Government can ensure that such events do not severely affect the farmer. Farmers constantly live with this foresight and preparation, whether it is enrolling their sons in good schools or colleges, paying the required fees, arranging marriages for their daughters when they come of age, constructing houses, or managing other essential responsibilities. All of a farmer's careful planning comes to naught when a natural calamity strikes. Sometimes it is excessive rainfall, sometimes drought, sometimes hailstorms, while at other times it may be strong winds, cyclones, or swarms of pests, in all such circumstances, the farmer suffers immensely. Relief comes to the farmer only when these disasters do not occur. At times, standing crops are destroyed. On other occasions, even after harvesting and storing the crop in the granary, incidents such as fire, storms, or heavy rainfall can ruin it.

The farmer invests his entire effort, money, fertilisers, diesel, and labour, only to see it all reduced to nothing. Such events place him in a severely precarious situation.

Farmers face certain problems for which neither the government nor the law provides a direct solution. However, the government can certainly extend assistance, and the administrative machinery can offer support. A new challenge has emerged recently. This is not confined to my constituency alone; stray animals are causing havoc across South and North Bihar as well as other parts of the country. In my area, the menace of blue bulls has become particularly severe. Herds of these animals enter the fields and consume the ripening crops, destroying all the labour and effort of the farmers.

Through you, I would like to urge the Government to take effective measures to address the menace posed by blue bulls and stray animals. If the Government does not wish to cull them, then they should be captured and relocated to safe shelters. Additionally, sterilisation should be carried out to control their rapidly growing population. In our childhood, even the sound of firecrackers would frighten blue bulls away. Today, however, they fear neither gunshots nor any other deterrent and freely enter villages. In our region, during the summer months, farmers traditionally grew green fodder for livestock, known locally as Jethua, in the month of Jeth.

However, farmers have now completely abandoned this cultivation because wherever greenery appears, herds of blue bulls descend upon the fields and destroy the crops. The Government must implement a practical solution. Either farmers should be given the authority to protect their crops effectively, or, if the Government prefers not to allow culling, then measures must be taken to sterilise the animals or relocate them to secure areas.

The farmer is a class, whose blessings, if received by anyone, certainly bring prosperity, whether it is a party or a leader. This has been proven not once but several times in our country. Our most revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee had provided such support to the farmers. Earlier, the country's farmers were submerged in debts to moneylenders, from whom they borrowed money at interest. The revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee extended support to farmers through the Kisan Credit Card (KCC). The illustrious Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured that farmers receive Rs. 2,000 in three instalments, totalling Rs. 6,000 annually, with the aim of increasing their income, doubling it by the year 2022, and reducing the cost of cultivation. Previously, this facility was limited to a certain number of acres of land. Our Government has removed this restriction. Now, every farmer is entitled to this facility and the associated financial support. Moreover, to reduce farmers' expenditure and guide them on the appropriate use of chemical fertilisers, including

which fertiliser to apply to which soil type and in what quantity, arrangements for soil testing and the Soil Health Card system have been implemented. The Government has also introduced Neem-Coated Urea to make fertilisers more effective, prevent misuse, and curb black marketing. Since the introduction of Neem-Coated Urea, black marketing of urea has ceased. This is a significant relief for farmers, who previously had to block roads and endure lathi charges to obtain urea and other fertilisers.

I would like to put forward a few suggestions. First, farmers should be granted discounts on the purchase of all agricultural equipment, and no GST or any other tax should be levied on these items. Second, when a farmer goes to purchase a tractor, the interest rates in banks are higher compared with those for commercial vehicles or loans for other purposes. I would like to urge the Government to ensure that the interest rates for tractors and other agricultural equipment are reduced to the minimum possible. Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by offering two or three additional suggestions for consideration.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I shall conclude my remarks in one minute. In my Parliamentary Constituency, a very large irrigation project has been pending for 45 years, namely the Uttar Koel Irrigation Project. If this project is completed and an iron gate is installed in its dam, irrigation could be extended to 1.25 lakh acres

of land. This would significantly enhance the prosperity and stability of farmers in our region.

My second suggestion relates to what Nama Nageswara Rao mentioned regarding river linking. If rivers are interconnected, drought-prone and plateau regions could benefit significantly. For example, if water from the Ganga river is diverted into the rivers of South Bihar, such as the Bataan, Punpun, Adri, Madar, Morhar, and Nilanjan, a greater flow of Ganga water into these rivers would provide substantial relief to farmers, not only for irrigation but also for drinking water to the general population.

I would also like to make a third point, the Government should consider experimenting with cooperative farming. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH: Hon. Chairperson, I am concluding my remarks. This is my final statement. The Government should consider experimenting with cooperative farming. For example, if I have five acres of land and there are five brothers, each brother currently owns a tractor and other equipment for his own acre. Instead, the entire village could form a cooperative unit, possessing only the equipment that is actually needed. This would reduce costs, allow the equipment to be used collectively on the fields, ensure labourers are paid, and enable the benefits to be

shared. The Government should certainly promote such cooperative farming initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to make one more point. Our Prime Minister has said, "One drop, more crop." Israel has already adopted this method. However, in our country, this system is currently expensive, and farmers are unable to adopt it. To make it accessible and to increase farmers' income, the equipment required should be made more affordable. This would enable farmers to adopt it, make agriculture easier and more economical in our country, and ultimately increase farmers' earnings.

[English]

SHRI FRANCISCO SARDINHA (SOUTH GOA): Sir, I must thank you for having given me this opportunity.

Sir, our country is an agrarian country. Around 61 per cent of our population depends on agriculture. It also contributes around 25 per cent to our national income. Though our land holdings are small in proportion to our population, we produce just about to feed our huge population and we suffer massive crop loss due to variety of factors that hit our agriculture sector, our people, and the economy. Unless measures are taken in utmost urgency to prevent such losses, we are certainly in for crop shortage and related consequential effects.

I rise to draw your attention to this recurring problem that cripples our agronomy and urge you to tackle it forthwith. Let me share the magnitude of crop loss. It is estimated by several credible agencies that the annual loss is to the tune of 17 per cent, amounting to 17.28 billion US dollars. The losses were occurred in the main crops like cotton, rice, maize, sugarcane, groundnut, pulses, and wheat. In addition to the normal reasons for crop losses like weeds, insects, fungi, bacteria, and virus, storage, processing, and logistics, are also the new factors.

17.00 hrs

According to the Economic Survey Report of last year, the crop loss due to these extreme temperature shocks is 4 per cent in kharif season and 4.7 per cent in rabi season. Due to below average rainfall, the loss is 12.8 per cent in rabi season and 12.8 per cent in kharif season. So, overall loss due to climate change is 15-18 per cent in irrigated land and 20-25 per cent in unirrigated areas.

Now, let us look at the specific cases. Due to vagaries of nature and conditions leading to sudden climate change, crops in an estimated 1,53,000 were destroyed. In Odisha, cyclone Fani caused a huge crop loss. Coming to Andhra Pradesh, cyclone Phethai created a heavy loss to the tune of Rs.243 crore. Coming further down to Kerala, due to heavy rains, paddy crops in 31,000 hectares were destroyed. Sir, about 1.21 lakh farmers suffered loss, and their loss was mainly in the paddy fields which is the main staple food of Kerala. Another State that I would like to quote is the State of Gujarat, the State of the hon. Prime Minister and the Home Minister. Only a month ago it was reported that about 45 lakh hectares of kharif area were affected. Soon after that, there was cyclone Kyarr. The Government has reported a considerable damage to the crop in many parts of Gujarat. The Government has deferred the procurement of groundnut and paddy and also has

promised crop insurance to the farmers. Even in my State, though a small State, due to torrential rains this year, there were heavy losses.

17.03 hrs (Dr. (Prof.) Kirit Premjibhai Solanki *in the Chair*)

I know that the Government is giving Rs.6000 per year as minimum income support to the farmers. But this holds good under normal conditions. When such catastrophes occur, the Government should ensure that whatever losses the farmers incur are paid to them immediately as then only we can stop farmers' suicides. Otherwise, this will go on increasing.

Sir, to stop the losses due to various reasons, I would like to propose some solutions. National Disaster Mitigation Authority, though they are doing a good job, should advise the farmers with early warning systems to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Farmers should sow high breed varieties that can withstand diseases and pests and also side-by-side they should go for diversification of crops and use of proper pesticides to control the weeds and insects.

It is not enough to produce but proper preservation of produce, like tomatoes, onions and potatoes, is also necessary. We have seen people throwing tomatoes on the roads. Such things should not occur. On the one hand we do not have food to eat as it is so

expensive - we are ranked at 100th position on Global Hunger Index - and on the other hand people throw food on the roads. This does not suit to the dignity of our country.

Having said this, I would request the hon. Minister that whenever the farmers suffer, the Government should come to their rescue so that the farmers' suicides will stop, their income will increase and the farming community of our country will prosper. Thank you.

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA (GUNTUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important and timely issue of crop loss in the country and its consequential impact on the farmers. The imminent consequence is nothing less than committing suicide by the farmers as they have no other option if there is crop loss due to rains or floods or droughts and if they are unable to pay back their loans.

Sir, I have been in this House for the last six years and I have observed that it has become a ritual to take up the discussion; be it related to farmers' suicides, be it related to distress among farmers and be it related to loss of crops due to floods or heavy rains or droughts. But I do not find any improvement over these last six years in the condition of farmers and farmers' suicides are going on unabated.

I do agree that we cannot avoid natural disasters, but we can certainly take remedial measures through appropriate interventions. I am not standing here to give sermons to the hon. Minister. He knows much better than me about the status of farmers. But I certainly wish to make some suggestions which I feel are important to better the conditions of farmers and the farming community. I will be pointed and specific.

My first suggestion is the implementation of all the recommendations of Dr. Swaminathan Commission, which have been only partially implemented so far. Now, we are giving the A2 and the FL component, that is, paid out costs for seeds and fertilizer, interests on working capital and farm labour. It was introduced two years ago. But in the last two years, we have found no improvement in the conditions of the farmers. So, I suggest for the consideration of the hon. Minister to please add the C2 component, as recommended by Dr. Swaminathan. I am sure it will definitely help the farmers to make farming a more viable proposition.

My second suggestion is that the consumption of food grains has to go up through effective implementation of the Food Security Act, Mid-Day Meal Scheme and other such schemes. It is only then that the full cycle of production, procurement, storage and consumption is completed. Otherwise, stocks will pile up in godowns resulting in wastage since when the new crops come in, they may not have the place needed for the storage.

The Goal no. 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals mandates to double farm productivity by 2030. I think India has actually been even more ambitious and has set the target as 2020. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what blueprint the Ministry has prepared and what roadmap it has, to reach these targets, as we are only days away from entering 2020.

The distribution of seeds is also very important. But unfortunately, good quality seeds are not available. So, I suggest that the availability and distribution of breeder, foundation and certified seeds, have to be improved considerably and same is the case with chemicals and fertilizers.

The next issue is irrigation. It is unfortunate that in spite of being the second largest irrigated country in the world, we have only one-third of our cropped area under irrigation. So, I suggest for granting at least one national project to every State and also request the Government of India to complete the Polavaram Project, which is the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh by approving its revised DPRs within a time-bound manner.

There are two kinds of calamities. One is natural, which as I said in the beginning, we can, to a great extent, avoid, even though it is difficult. The second one is man-made disaster. You cannot stop man-made disaster, more particularly, when one does it with malicious intention. The recent flash floods of the Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh submerged agriculture crops in as many as 5300 hectares and horticulture crops of 1,400 hectares in the Krishna district. Kolluru, Duggirala, Kollipara, Bhattiprolu and Repalle mandals of Guntur districts, were also severely affected.

The point to be noted here is that this disaster was created deliberately. The objective was to score political points and to prove that the earlier Government was wrong. The Government of Andhra Pradesh deliberately mismanaged the flow of flood water to prove that the Capital City of Amaravati is prone to floods and also with the intent to submerge the house in which former CM, Shri Chandrababu Naidu Garu, is staying on rent. The new Government has been intent on shifting the Capital from Amaravati to a location preferred by the CM and had allegedly thought that proving that Amaravati is prone to floods would help them in achieving this without considering that there will be thousands of acres of crop loss and thousands of farmers would suffer as a result of their actions.

***SHRI M. SELVARAJ (NAGAPPATTINAM):** Thank you Sir. Vanakkam. Saint Thiruvalluvar says, “They alone live who live by agriculture; all others lead a cringing, dependent life”. Mahakavi Bharathi says that we should salute farming and industry and we should discourage those who are idle and pleasure seekers. Saint Thiruvalluvar compares farmers with God in Thirukkural. Today farmers live a miserable life. A farmer toils hard to protect the crop from the time of sowing till its harvest. He is concerned about the crop by watching its every minute growth, every day. If the growth is improper, he always thinks about how to ensure its proper growth. He forgets to sleep till its harvest. A farmer faces several difficulties in ensuring the growth of every crop. He spends more time with the crops than with his children. If he is not into agriculture, this society cannot eat. At times of calamity, he faces so many difficulties. There are two types of natural disasters. Tamil Nadu, particularly the delta districts are like a plain area. People of this area are dependent on agriculture. In 12 districts, agriculture is the main profession. Because of inadequate water for agriculture, farmers are not able to follow periodic farming activities. Union government should therefore ensure supply of water to agricultural areas of Tamil Nadu. All the southern rivers should be interlinked.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

This Scheme should be implemented immediately. Ganges-Cauvery link scheme was announced when Smt. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister. This scheme is pending till now.

This Ganges-Cauvery link scheme should be implemented, Southern rivers should be linked soon. So that agricultural activities may be protected. Farmers spend approximately Rs. 1800 per quintal production of paddy. He produces 20 quintal of paddy in an acre. He is unable to get remunerative price for his produce. MSP is fixed by the Union Government. This should be increased. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Committee's Report says that we can protect the lives of farmers only by providing 50 per cent extra cost in addition to the production cost. This government should act in accordance to the suggestions of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Committee.

I belong to Nagappattinam parliamentary constituency. There are two districts in my constituency. There are adjoining districts like Thanjavur, Pudukkottai, Perambalur and Cuddalore. Whenever there is a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, Nagappattinam district is the district which will be affected followed by the districts like Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Cuddalore, Perambalur and Tiruchirappalli. Almost 12 districts of Tamil Nadu were affected because of Gaja cyclone. As many as 80 lakh coconut trees were uprooted. Many of the beneficial trees were uprooted. As much as 12 lakh hectares of

land was inundated. But till date crop insurance claims have not been settled.

We have two companies, New India Assurance Company and National Insurance Company which are into crop insurance business. There should be a national crop insurance scheme. Though that scheme farmers can get insurance cover for their crops and can get compensation. Private players should be restricted. Farmers affected by Gaja cyclone last year did not get their insured amount for loss of crops till now. As many as 196 revenue villages of Nagappattinam district and 206 villages of Thiruvarur district did not get this insurance amount. More than 200 villages of Thanjavur district did not get crop insurance compensation. The coconut growers are suffering till now because of non receipt of compensation for loss of trees. I urge upon the Union Government to intervene in this matter and ensure that compensation is given to farmers who lost their crops due to Gaja cyclone. Thank you Sir.

***DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE (BEED):** Hon'ble Chairman Sir, kindly allow me to speak in Marathi. First of all I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this issue under Rule 193. All the MPs tried to describe the plight of the farmers in their areas. Even during the last term, we had demanded to discuss this issue of adverse effects of natural calamity on the farmers. Fortunately, we are discussing it during this term. In the last Lok Sabha term, Maharashtra was facing drought conditions but this time we have been facing flood situation due to heavy rains. It means the mother nature is targeting these poor farmers. As far as Maharashtra is concerned, 34 districts, 352 Tehsils and 94 lakh hectare of agricultural land have got badly affected. Around 1 crore 4 lakh farmers are directly affected. In Marathwada region around 41 lakh hectare of land got affected due to the heavy rains and in my Beed district around 7.61 lakh hectare of land got badly affected.

We had been facing water scarcity in Beed district but now there is water everywhere. When I visited there the flood water inundated the entire district and I had to take a bullock cart to cross the roads.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

DR. PRITAM GOPINATH RAO MUNDE: Sir, this is very important. The entire state of Maharashtra is affected. To the best of my knowledge, I am the only Member of Parliament from Maharashtra representing the Bharatiya Janata Party speaking on this matter. Therefore, I would like to request that you kindly allow me a little time to speak.

[Translation]

*Today we should not go into details. Cutting across party lines all the leaders of different parties have visited the farms to take stock of the situation. Some issues should be beyond politics and we all should come together for humanity. It's not easy to resolve this issue until and unless we know the ground reality. Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra had announced the relief assistance for farmers but that was not sufficient. But we should not get into the blame game instead we should try to help the farmers honestly. The rulers in Maharashtra are now doing a face saving exercise. They had promised to clear the 7/12 certificate for farmers but now they are making excuses. I hope that Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra would definitely help the poor farmers. The state and

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

the Central Government would come together for the farmers in Maharashtra.

While dealing with the natural calamities most of the funds got spent on compensation. But we should focus on continuous progress. Some long term schemes should also be taken into consideration. For short term schemes, cash benefits were being given to the farmers. During this kind of situation, we must think of farmers. But he is only a part of total system. Traders and consumers are also get affected. Whenever you give any kind of monetary help to farmers, it is for them and their families. But the farm labourers do not get anything out of it. Hence, I would like to request the Union Government to categorise the help. Availability of fodder for the cattles should also be ensured. We must also work for their health and hygiene. Diseases not only affect crops but also the cattles. Meteorological Department should work scientifically. Timely alerts should be issued to the farmers. Crop cycle should also be changed.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, conclude your remarks.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

***DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:** Everybody in this House is fighting for his or her constituency, State and region but we should go beyond this. Agricultural related business should be encouraged. We keep on demanding reservation for various castes and categories. But I demand to give reservations to the children of farmers and farm labourers in higher education so that the coming generation could survive and settle well on their own. Lastly, the farmer who feed us all should be not kept empty handed. All kinds of assistance should be provided to him by the government. Thank you.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

[Translation]

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL (NAGAUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, today an important discussion is taking place in this House under Rule 193. Our farmers endure immense hardships due to unseasonal rainfall, excessive rain, hailstorms, and various other natural calamities. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister, and in particular the Hon. Speaker, for facilitating this important discussion on farmers under Rule 193. Before me, learned speakers from various parties have also shared their views. Despite 70 years of independence, farmers across the country continue to face severe difficulties, and even today, farmers are compelled to take their own lives.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, both the Bharatiya Janata Party and the NDA Government, during the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee as well as over the past five years, have made efforts to interlink rivers and waterways. However, at that time, as there was no full majority government, these efforts could not be fully realised. *...(Interruptions)* I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister for addressing, over the past five years, the wide range of challenges facing our country, including the problems of those at the grassroots. Whether it has been strengthening India's position on the global map or tackling other national issues, he has also paid attention to farmers' concerns. Significant schemes have

been launched for farmers' debt relief. I appeal to the Hon. Prime Minister to take bold measures that have not been achieved in the past seventy years. You have the authority to abolish Article 370 and revoke Article 35A. I would like to urge you to undertake something similar for farmers, for they are watching you with great hope. For 60 years, the Congress Party left farmers in despair, and during that period, apart from suicides, illiteracy, and unemployment, it contributed very little to the nation.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, Congress Governments have waived loans worth Rs. 3 lakh crore for wealthy industrialists. Nothing could be more shameful than this. Recently, a Congress Government was formed in Rajasthan. During the election campaign, Rahul Gandhi had promised that within 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 10 days of forming the Government, the entire debt of Rajasthan would be waived. Similar assurances were given in several other states. However, in the name of debt relief, the outcome has been zero.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, the schemes introduced by the Hon. Prime Minister, particularly the objective of providing irrigation water to every field, will undoubtedly strengthen the farmers of this country. Once farmers become strong and self-reliant, nearly 70 Percent of the problem of unemployment will also be addressed. In earlier times, farmers possessed large landholdings. However, with

the increase in population, these holdings have gradually been fragmented. Where a grandfather once owned 100 bighas of land, his grandson is left with only 30 or even 20 bighas. Therefore, it is essential that in drought-prone and famine-affected regions, rivers and streams are interlinked and water is ensured up to the fields of every farmer. This will certainly bring substantial relief and welfare to farmers across the nation.

Hon. Chairperson, there has consistently been a demand for the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission Report. We too have organised large-scale farmers' movements on the soil of Rajasthan. Several crops that were earlier outside the ambit of MSP have now been brought under MSP by the Hon. Prime Minister. Farmers' loans have also been waived at various places, and the Swaminathan Commission Report has been implemented. Produce such as moong, which earlier sold for as little as four rupees per kilogram, is today fetching prices as high as seven thousand rupees. Many crops and agricultural outputs that earlier suffered losses due to unfavourable market prices have now been addressed. Just as farmers in countries like Japan and the United States receive prices nearly three times the market value of their produce, similar efforts have been made to ensure fair remuneration for farmers in our country as well. ...(*Interruptions*) Hon. Chairperson, Sir, this concerns farmers' livelihoods. I am speaking as the only Member

from Rajasthan, and I would like to request to place this important matter before the House.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I would like to request all Members to conclude their remarks within five minutes. You have already taken four and a half minutes. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Sir, I have only just laid the groundwork. Kindly allow me two or four more minutes. I have brought these written pages with me, and I must be allowed to speak on them. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please ensure that you conclude within five minutes. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Hon. Chairperson, Sir, kindly grant me two or three more minutes. ...(*Interruptions*) Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to urge the Hon. Prime Minister to implement the Swaminathan Commission Report. Hon. Narendra Modi is such a Prime Minister that once his resolve is fully awakened, this task will certainly be accomplished. It is already in his mind. I met him this very morning, and he is deeply concerned about the farmers of the country as well as the nation's youth. At present, in Maharashtra, particularly in Nashik and Lasalgaon, where onion production is the highest in the country, unseasonal

rainfall has damaged the onion crop. Onion prices have risen sharply, and farmers are agitated.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, please allow me one or two more minutes. When you look at me like this, I get disturbed. Please listen, Sir, kindly give me four more minutes. Six minutes have already elapsed. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: kindly conclude your speech in one minute.

[Translation]

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Hon. Chairperson, Sir, this is not a political issue. A discussion on farmers is underway, and we are all united in our commitment to strengthen farmers. However, the Congress has betrayed farmers. ...(*Interruptions*) I would like to respectfully request the Hon. Prime Minister and the Government to address the serious irregularities being committed by insurance companies under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The full premium is collected from farmers, but when crops are damaged, the insurance companies disappear. These companies function arbitrarily. While premium recovery is complete, when it comes to compensation, no timely action is taken for assessment. In collusion with middlemen, bank officials accept money and process

insurance claims. The objective with which the Hon. Prime Minister introduced the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana must be realised in practice. Concrete and effective steps should be taken to ensure proper implementation of this scheme. ...*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Chairperson, I would also like to draw the attention of the Government to the rainfall data of the year 2019. In 2019, excessive rainfall occurred in 31 percent of the regions of country. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hanuman Ji, please conclude. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Hon. Chairperson, I will conclude my remarks within one minute. It has been six minutes and 57 seconds, and I am finishing within one minute. 15 percent of the country's regions received deficient rainfall, while 54 percent received normal rainfall, due to which farmers have been affected in different ways. In my state of Rajasthan alone, farmers have suffered losses over approximately 27.36 lakh hectares of land. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hanuman Ji, your time has exceeded seven minutes. I now call upon Anupriya Ji to speak.

Shrimati Anupriya Patel.

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Hon. Chairperson, I am concluding within one minute. Anupriya Ji, please wait for one minute. ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, you speak to us very cordially in the gallery. ...(*Interruptions*) Please give me just one minute. ...(*Interruptions*) As losses have occurred over a large area, I would like to request that damage assessment be conducted immediately after the loss. ...(*Interruptions*) I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister for ensuring that Rs. 6,000 under the Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana has reached every farmer. If anyone can remedy the long-standing setbacks caused over 60 years by the Congress and provide farmers with a new direction, it is the Hon. Prime Minister who will do so for the farmers of this country. ...(*Interruptions*) The Government that is most concerned and serious about farmers is the Government led by Hon. Narendra Modi. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL (MIRZAPUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this important discussion on “Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers”. Hon. Chairperson, in the agricultural sector, there are several risks even before the harvesting of crops. The most significant among these are climate change and natural calamities, including excessive rainfall, floods, and drought-like conditions.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please do not interrupt.

...(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Jagdambika Pal-ji, please take your seat.

[Translation] The entire nation is observing who genuinely has the farmers’ interests at heart.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Jagdambika Pal-ji, you are a senior Member. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Nothing will go on record. Anupriya Ji, please proceed with your remarks.

*...(Interruptions)**

SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL: Hon. Chairperson, Sir, thank you very much for allowing me to participate in this important discussion on 'crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers'. In the agricultural sector, there are numerous risks even before crop harvesting. Among these, the most significant is climate change, along with various natural calamities such as excessive rainfall, hailstorms, floods, or droughts. Between June 2019 and November 2019, in my own state of Uttar Pradesh, 8.8 lakh hectares of crop area were damaged due to floods and hydro-meteorological hazards. Across the country, a total of 63.9 lakh hectares of crop area was affected. In addition, crops are also damaged by pests, wild animals, or stray livestock. When losses are caused by stray livestock, state governments take responsibility. However, for the other causes I have mentioned, our Government implemented the revised Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana starting from the Kharif season 2016-17. Alongside this, a restructured weather-based crop insurance scheme has also been introduced. Regarding this insurance scheme, I would like to bring a few important points to

*Not recorded.

the attention of the Hon. Minister. Firstly, the Economic Survey 2017-18 revealed that the number of farmers availing crop insurance is very low. Even among those primarily cultivating wheat and paddy, less than five percent of farmers insure their crops. A major reason for this is that either farmers are not aware of crop insurance or they do not fully understand that this facility is being provided by the Government. Accordingly, in 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare revised the operational guidelines of the scheme and made it mandatory for insurance companies to allocate 0.5 percent of the total premium collected each season for publicity and awareness initiatives. I would like to put a brief question to the Hon. Minister. To what extent have insurance companies complied with the guidelines provided for publicity and awareness?

Secondly, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) noted that in previous crop insurance schemes, coverage for non-indebted farmers was significantly low, highlighting the need for the department to enhance coverage for non-indebted farmers. For this also, insurance companies were told to increase the coverage of non-loanee farmers who have not taken loan by 10 percent as compared to the previous season. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister to what extent progress has been made in this regard. This is a pressing issue.

Thirdly, the Standing Committee on Agriculture had noted in 2017 that when state governments assess crop losses, they do not adequately adopt technological aids, nor do they make use of satellite imagery. Consequently, the Committee had advised the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare to urge state governments to incorporate all such modern technological tools. In addition, the assessments conducted in relation to crop harvesting are often not carried out with complete accuracy or diligence at the state level, which is a matter of serious concern.

Fourthly, and most importantly, the settlement period for insurance claims under the crop insurance scheme should be shortened. Claims should ideally be settled within two months. The Parliamentary Standing Committee had also recommended that an institutional mechanism be established to monitor the settlement of pending claims. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to what extent these recommendations have been implemented.

I would like to congratulate the Government for formulating a seven-point agenda aimed at doubling farmers' income by 2022 and guiding agriculture towards prosperity. This agenda encompasses initiatives such as "One Drop, More Crop", the Soil Health Card, substantial investment in storage and cold storage facilities, value addition through food processing, the establishment of a National Agriculture Market, and the promotion of agriculture alongside

dairy, animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry, and beekeeping. Under the PM-Kisan Scheme, farmers receive financial assistance of Rs. 2,000, and under the PM-Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana, a pension of Rs. 3,000 is provided to beneficiaries upon reaching the age of 60. The Government has taken all these significant steps to support and strengthen the farming community.

In addition, I would like to urge the Government to take a significant step. In our country, every producer, from the maker of a needle to the manufacturer of an aircraft, has the right to determine the price of their products. Yet the farmer, the provider of food for 130 crore Indians, does not have the right to set the price of his own produce. This can only be realised if the Government of India takes a historic decision to accord agriculture the status of an industry. I conclude my remarks by making this earnest appeal to the Government. I express my sincere gratitude for giving me the opportunity to participate in today's discussion. Thank you.

SHRIMATI NAVNEET RAVI RANA (AMRAVATI): Sir, I sincerely thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Today, many Hon. Members of Parliament from Maharashtra have addressed this House regarding the farmers of Maharashtra, representing their respective Parliamentary Constituencies and the state as a whole. Currently, in many regions of Maharashtra, including my own, excessive rainfall has caused severe damage. After personally visiting each district and sub-district to observe the actual conditions faced by farmers, it is clear that their distress is not just emotional or superficial (not merely tears). The suffering is profound and intense, almost as if their very vitality or life force is being drained. Despite their relentless effort, working day and night in the fields and dedicating their lives to the land, they are left with nothing tangible or economically to show for their labour. Some farmers invested Rs. 200,000 in their crops, others Rs. 50,000, yet when the final outcome is seen, the farmers are left empty-handed. There has been a 100 percent loss of soybean, a 100 percent loss of cotton, and substantial losses of tur and moong. Vidarbha, famously known as the orange belt, has suffered a complete loss of oranges throughout the region. There has also been a loss of paddy. In view of all these factors, I would like to make a respectful request to the Hon. Minister to send a special team to Maharashtra to assess the full extent of the damage in Vidarbha, Western Maharashtra, and

Marathwada. In certain areas, sugarcane crops have also suffered. Vidarbha, which historically experienced severe drought, has today faced significant losses due to excessive rainfall. Another issue affecting our farmers is the electricity supplied at night. Currently, they receive electricity for 12 hours during the night. Because of this twelve-hour schedule, farmers labour in the fields throughout the day and receive electricity at night. During the day, they cannot rest, and at night, when they should be sleeping, the electricity prevents them from resting. I would like to request my Ministry that in the forthcoming decisions, the matter of load-shedding in Maharashtra be addressed and resolved. Farmers labour in the fields throughout the day, and they should at least be able to sleep peacefully at night. Many farms are surrounded by forests, and in such areas, crops sometimes suffer from excess rainfall, sometimes from drought, but the most severe damage is caused by wild animals. I would like to urge the Ministry to provide assistance for installing proper chaining and fencing around such farms. This support is of utmost importance, because while rainfall is a gift from above and farmers will take the water when it comes, we can protect farms situated near forests. By equipping these farms with adequate chaining and fencing, the crops can be safeguarded against damage by wild animals. This is my sincere request.

I now turn to the matter of debt relief. As one of our colleagues has just mentioned, debt waivers were granted during Shri Pawar's tenure. I would like to make a request to the Union Government. I am fully aware that the State and the Centre are governed by different parties, and therefore, implementation may be challenging, yet I must place this demand before you. The condition of farmers in Maharashtra today is extremely critical. Setting aside party affiliations, the Union Government must provide substantial support to the State. The State and the Union Government together should ensure at least Rs. 50,000 crore in assistance to our farmers. Our farmers must receive debt relief so that they can continue to live with dignity and sustain themselves in the future. This is the support our farmers urgently require, and I make this request with utmost sincerity. Whenever our farmers approach nationalised banks, they are often told to apply online, to come on a particular day, or to return after several days, sometimes even a week. A farmer earning merely Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 cannot be made to run around banks for one or two months, only to be denied a loan for cultivation. Therefore, I would like to request the Ministry to direct all nationalised banks in Maharashtra, and wherever farmers reside, to provide easy access to facilities through a single-window system, ensuring that loans are granted promptly and farmers can continue

their agricultural activities without unnecessary delay. Hon. Chairperson, this is the extent of my humble request.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I would like to request all Hon. Members that, as many Members wish to speak on this, please conclude your remarks within five minutes each.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (JHALAWAR-BARAN): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. Shri Suresh and Shri Kirtikar have brought this discussion under Rule 193, and we are discussing it today.

Sir, I am elected from Jhalawar-Baran. The party has given me the time to speak, and because of the party, I am able to stand here. I would like to point out that due to excessive rainfall, crops have been damaged in about 13 states, including Kerala, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and others. I come from the Hadoti region, where our Hon. Speaker Sir is from. In some areas there is water, while the Hon. Minister here is from Barmer, a desert area. However, this year, I would like to share the rainfall figures from our region. The normal rainfall in our area is 760 mm, but this year Baran received 1087 mm of rainfall. Jhalawar normally receives 813 mm, but this time it received approximately 1492 mm. Due to such excessive rainfall, crops in our region have been damaged. Following the damage, it was the responsibility of the current state government, from patwaris to tehsildars, to assess the losses. Yet, as of now, the state government has not taken any action to compensate for the damaged crops. In a few months, we will have Panchayat elections. It appears that the state government has decided that compensation for farmers should only be credited to their accounts a few days

before the elections. Hon. Modi Ji, under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, ensured that bank accounts were opened for all. Yet the state government has stipulated that the funds should only reach accounts just before the Panchayat elections. On one hand, we have farmers who grow food for everyone while they themselves go hungry. We are indebted to them, and when they demand their due, we must ensure they receive it. Since the state government has not acted, I would like to request the Union Government to conduct a survey so that farmers in our region also receive the funds they deserve. Just as the Kharif crops were damaged, our Rabi crops have also suffered due to hailstorms. Therefore, a proper on-ground assessment must be conducted to evaluate the losses.

Sir, please allow me two more minutes. Along with this, the allocation for our cotton has also been increased. For this, I express my gratitude to the Union Government. I would like to say only this, that our Hon. Prime Minister has launched the Crop Insurance Scheme for farmers. Our Government had announced an allocation of Rs. 31,062 crore for the Crop Insurance Scheme in the year 2014–15. Today, this amount has also been increased by our respected Hon. Prime Minister. In view of this, we would like that this amount should reach our farmers. Assistance should also be provided for those farmers whose crops have been damaged. Sir, our Hon. Prime Minister has also worked for the Soil Health Card.

Because of this, the cropping pattern in our region has also improved.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Sir, I will conclude my remarks in two minutes. I would like to state that the Hon. Prime Minister has spoken about the Kisan Samman Nidhi. In our State of Rajasthan, only 27,000 people have benefited from it. The remaining people have not been able to receive its benefit. I would like to urge that they too should be provided this benefit. Keeping in view the amount that was earmarked for pensions, the work related to oilseed machinery should also be taken forward. In our region, organic farming is practised. In our Hadoti region, Ashwagandha and Safed Musli are cultivated. All these should also be promoted further so that our region may develop. In Rajasthan, our farmers work day and night, just as they do in your State of Gujarat.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Dushyant, please conclude your remarks.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Sir, in conclusion, I would like to highlight that during the elections in 2018, the leaders of the Congress party had promised to waive loans up to Rs. 2 lakh, but till now they have not waived the loans. Whatever work has been done in the country today has been done by Hon. Modi ji and his Government. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI THOMAS CHAZHIKADAN (KOTTAYAM): Sir, the farmers in the entire country, right from Jammu and Kashmir in the northern part of India to Kerala in the southern part of India, are in great distress. Today we have seen so many hon. Members mentioning about the plight of farmers in Maharashtra. The price of onion has gone beyond Rs.100. But just before three months, in Maharashtra there were no takers for the onion. So, this is the plight of the farmers. They should be assured of a minimum basic price for all the agricultural produces.

In Kerala, we have around 11 lakh farmers who are doing farming in natural rubber. These farmers do not get the minimum price. Once they were getting around Rs.300 but now they are getting only Rs.120. The cost of production is more than Rs.180.

So many Members were mentioning about Dr. Swaminathan who is the father of Indian Green Revolution. Dr. Swaminathan has mentioned that the farmers should get a minimum of one-and-a-half times more of the cost of production, that is, 150 per cent more of the cost of production. But the farmers do not get even the cost of production anywhere in India.

So, this should be avoided and they should be made eligible to get a minimum support price. In case of rubber, they should get a

minimum of Rs.200. I have mentioned it earlier also. Everywhere in India, almost in every State, we have the human-animal conflict. The farmers do the farming but the wild as well as all species of other animals come to their farms and destroy their crops. The farmers cannot touch the animals. They cannot shoot them. Earlier, they were permitted to do that. But now because of the directions from the Forest and Wild Life Department, they cannot do anything. So, these restrictions should be lifted. In Kerala, six out of 14 districts are affected by this problem. In Kannur, there is a very big agitation going on in this regard. About one lakh farmers have decided to go on march before the Collectorate Office. This is a great problem. It has been mentioned by many hon. Members. This should be seriously considered by the Government of India at the earliest because the farmers are not in a position to do farming.

Sir, India has entered into many international trade agreements of which more than 10 are Free Trade Agreements and six are Preferential Trade Agreements. These agreements have adversely been affecting the farming community. The farmers of all sectors of agriculture are not getting proper prices of their produce because of the tariff free import of agricultural products from foreign countries. This should be avoided. This is applicable to rubber, coffee, pepper and even for milk products. This should be reviewed at the earliest.

Recently, we were talking about The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement. If we get into this agreement, it would have 16 countries as its members, including India. If we go for this agreement, there will be free trade among these countries and India will have to import their products without any tariff, which will again badly affect farming in India.

I also request the Government to consider giving a minimum pension to the old age farmers. The Government employees get regular increments. Moreover, they get Dearness Allowance according to the Cost-of-Living-Index. But the farmers do not get even the cost which they invest. They should be given a minimum pension of Rs.10,000 instead of any other financial support given by the Government.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you, Sir, for allowing me to participate in this discussion under Rule 193 regarding crop loss due to various reasons. Sir, despite technological development, IT development, service sector development and industrial development, India's backbone is agriculture and more than 60 per cent of the population in the country still depends on it. But, unfortunately, due significance and importance is not given to the farming community in India even after 70 years of Independence.

Sir, in 1996, when I came to Parliament in the 11th Lok Sabha, I remember that in the Budget discussion we used to say that 33 per cent of the total GDP was contributed by agriculture. Now, the contribution of agriculture has just come down to 11 or 12 per cent. That means, agriculture production in the country is shrinking because of the loss of crop due to various reasons which has to be addressed on top most priority.

Sir, the Government is following a policy to formalize almost all the informal sectors in the country. We know what happened to the retail sector. After implementation of GST, informal sectors being formalized means it will affect the largest population of our country. If you formalize the informal sectors, major population of the country, especially the common people of the country will be

excluded from the mainstream. That is happening in the agricultural field also.

Sir, we have passed the Food Security Act. Do we know what is the food need of the country? Are we able to produce to satisfy the need of the country? This has to be first taken into consideration. The statistical report goes to show that by 2050 India's population will be 1.65 billion which is now 1.32 billion. Suppose, by 2050, India's population increases to 1.65 billion, whether we will be able to meet the food demand of the population at that time of our country.(*Interruptions*)

18.00 hrs

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, with your permission, let us extend the time of the House by one hour.

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, the question is whether by 2050, we will be able to meet the food needs of the population of India, which is increasing. What is the main reason? Animal-man conflict is there, but according to me, definitely the animals should be protected and also, the farmers should be protected, for which a huge investment is required. I know that in the areas of western ghats in my constituency, farmers are suffering like anything

because of the animals. So, the animal-man conflict can be prevented by using scientific methods now-a-days.

Sir, climate change or weather change is the main reason for loss of the crop. If we examine the so many studies which have been made, they say that wheat, maize and sorghum are the worst hit by this phenomenon of climate change. By 2030, rice and wheat are likely to see six to ten per cent decrease in yields. There are also examples of crops like potato, soybean, chick pea and mustard on which climate change will have a neutral or positive impact. If that be the case, the position will be very devastating because we will not be able to meet the minimum requirements to feed the people of our country.

Sir, now we are importing onions from Egypt. Suppose, if this goes on like this, there will be a disastrous condition. That is why, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru decades back had said, 'If you are not considering the concerns of the agricultural community in the country, India will be going on to a disastrous way.' Now-a-days, that is coming true, if we examine. My suggestion is that an innovative system based on indigenous and traditional knowledge that protects the natural resources' base while increasing the productivity is needed. Mere productivity increase will never meet the purpose because after the Green Revolution, we all know, the entire focus was on increasing productivity and production.

Unfortunately, we were not concerned about the environmental impact, climate change, soil health and all such things. Subsequent to the Green Revolution, if we examine, the fertility of the soil has gone down. So, we have to protect the environment and the ecological system also.

My last point is regarding the compensation. If there is a crop loss due to flood, drought or any other natural calamity, the compensation, which is being provided according to the National Disaster Management Act, is very meagre. It is an insult to the farming community. So, I urge upon the Government to kindly review the compensation which is enunciated in the National Disaster Management Act as it is very meagre. It has to be increased according to the cost of production. The main problem the farmers are facing is that there is a big difference in the cost of production and the price of product. That is the basic reason. This anomaly has to be rectified for which I fully support the suggestion made by Shri Thomas Chazhikadan that the farmers should be considered equal to the Government servants for all purposes. With this, I conclude.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: I would like to request all the Hon. Members to please conclude their remarks within four minutes.

SHRI NANDKUMAR SINGH CHAUHAN (KHANDWA):

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Madhya Pradesh has suffered the maximum damage due to floods, and to narrate the full account, I seek a little indulgence from you.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: There is no time. Please conclude your remarks within the allotted time.

SHRI NANDKUMAR SINGH CHAUHAN: Hon. Chairperson, Sir, in all my experience and in my lifetime, I have never seen such extensive losses suffered by farmers in my region as I have seen this year. Every possible form and manifestation of erratic weather has struck the farmers of the country. In some places there has been excessive rainfall, elsewhere storms, somewhere dust storms, in some areas cyclones have caused damage, and in other places losses have occurred due to deficient rainfall. The Diwali of the farmers in my Parliamentary Constituency was bleak. With regard to Dev Uthani Ekadashi, farmers began to say that this was not Dev Uthani Ekadashi, but rather Dev Ruthani Ekadashi, meaning that the gods were displeased. Regarding the damage caused in my area, a young man posted a poem on social media on this natural calamity, which was read by lakhs of people.

Jameen jal chuki, aasaman baki hai,
 darakhto tumhaara imtihaan baakee hai,
 vo jo kheton ke medhon par udaas baithe hain,
 unheen kee aankhon mein ab tak eemaan baakee hai,
 baadalo, ab to taras khao kisaanon par,
 kisee ka makaan giravee, kisee ka lagaan baakee hai.

(This verse poignantly reflects the anguish of farmers after natural calamities, highlighting devastation, resilience, and an appeal to nature for compassion, while underscoring the economic distress faced by agrarian communities.)

Chairperson Sir, this story is not confined only to my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, but reflects the condition of the entire State of Madhya Pradesh. The irony of Madhya Pradesh is that the schemes launched by the Union Government for providing relief to farmers have not benefited my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency due to the inaction of the State Government. Under the Kisan Samman Nidhi, every farmer receives Rs. 6,000. In Burhanpur district, 64,000 farmers are registered, but out of these, only 22,000 farmers have received the Kisan Samman Nidhi. Hon. Kamal Nath Ji had spoken about waiving loans up to Rs. 2 lakh, and therefore farmers did not repay their loans. Crop insurance premium is deducted only when a fresh loan is taken. Farmers did not take

fresh loans in the hope that their loans would be waived, but as a result, the crop insurance premium was also not deducted, and today they have been deprived of the benefits of crop insurance as well.

You are giving less time to talk about Madhya Pradesh's...* The farmers of Madhya Pradesh have suffered the biggest loss due to the wrong policies of the State Government. I would like to say about ...*.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please refer to the Madhya Pradesh Government.

SHRI NANDKUMAR SINGH CHAUHAN: The Madhya Pradesh Government's approach towards the poor is such that it first pushes them into hardship through its policies and then seeks to project itself as benevolent by offering token relief.

Through this House, I would like to urge the Hon. Prime Minister and the Government that a great deal has already been done for the farmers. In this year of crisis, my suggestion is that MGNREGA should be linked with agriculture. If MGNREGA funds are integrated with agricultural activities, it will provide substantial relief to farmers. By doing so, significant relief can be extended to them. When Modi is there, it is possible.

*Not recorded.

Through you, I would make this humble appeal to the Government. Madhya Pradesh has been provided considerable relief, including assistance amounting to Rs. 1,000 crore. If further relief is extended, it would be a great act of benevolence.

SHRI ABU TAHER KHAN (MURSHIDABAD): Hon. Chairperson, I thank you for allowing me to speak on the issue of farmers under Rule 193.

[English]

*Thank you Chairman Sir. We are discussing crop loss and its impact on farmers under Rule 193. Agriculture is the mainstay of our country and agriculturists are our treasure. We come to know about the plight and economic condition of the farmers from the pages of newspapers. Everyday 30 farmers commit suicide on an average in India. They are under huge burden of farm loans. On the one hand, he is deprived of the remunerative price of his crops; on the other hand, the atmosphere is not conducive for agricultural activities. So the farmers are in a pathetic situation. Then what is the way out? Farmers of West Bengal get various facilities like crop loan through cooperatives, subsidy to purchase agricultural equipment, seeds at subsidized and cheap rates. So while the Bengal farmers receive all sorts of assistance from the state government, unfortunately farmers of other states do not get any such help. People have a lot of hope and expectations from the Government of India. They had expected that it would support and stand by the farmers in distress which it had promised before coming to power.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

However, the farmers today are a deprived lot. Why are they committing suicides? What is the reason? We must find out those reasons.

Hon. Minister of Agriculture is present in the House. He must be aware that due to lack of remunerative prices, farmers are in a pitiable situation. Many hon. Members have already flagged the issues of their respective states. MGNREGA should be linked with agriculture. Farmers should be supplied with good quality seeds at subsidized rates along with better equipment and tools. Supply of water should be ensured; power should be supplied free of cost. If all this is done, then the economic or financial condition of the farmers will improve a lot. But it is being said that the income of the farmers has increased manifold; an impression is being created that they are in a very good condition. Why then are the farmers are pining for help? Why are they deprived? Whatever may be said today, we cannot find that they are economically better off or self-reliant.

I would urge upon the Minister of Agriculture to kindly do something for the farmers. There was cyclone Aila in Bengal which devastated the farmers completely. But they have not received an iota of financial assistance from the Central Government. Even cyclone Bulbul has wrecked havoc in the state but the Government of India remained quiet. I request the hon. Minister to extend his

helping hand to the Bengal farmers. Sir, I shall take only a minute. Today, the retail market price of onions is Rs.100 per kg. but when onions are cultivated, even in my state, it is sold for Rs.5 only. There is no storage facility for onions. If storage facilities are opened, it can be highly beneficial for the farming communities.

SHRI RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU (NARSAPURAM):

Thank you, Chairman Sir, for giving me an opportunity to talk about the most important subject which is the need of the hour for the country. I will take only four minutes, as you have suggested, to speak on four important points. The first point is regarding the insurance claim that is to be made by the farmers. As of now, under the Fasal Bima Yojana, the time given is only three days for the farmers to submit the proposal. As you know, farming is a sensitive subject and farmer is the most sensitive person. He needs considerable time to recover and come out of the shock of any calamity that happens. In this regard, I would request to change the present time of three days to submit the claim and fulfil the formalities. At least ten days' time should be given to address this particular important issue.

Another issue is that, Sir, when there is drought in some districts, the State Government gives the information to the Centre to send the team. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, we have south-west monsoon as well as north-east monsoon. If there is a failure of the south-west monsoon, by the time we give the representation and the team is sent, due to north-east monsoon, rainfall must have been there. Due to this, there is a misunderstanding that this claim is a wrong claim. If the team is sent at the right time, then, this kind of anomalies would not happen.

In our State, our hon. Chief Minister has started a scheme, Cultivator Credit Card. Instead of Farmer Credit Card, it is the Cultivator Credit Card because more than 50 per cent of farming in this country is being done by the cultivators. We call it '*kaulu daru*' in our language, Sir. For the cultivators, unfortunately, there is no availability of credit. Any bank that gives the loan, takes land as collateral. Cultivators are not getting a loan under any other scheme. Hence, they go to private lenders to get a loan at the highest rate of interest. They are in tremendous trouble. To come out of this hardship, our State has started a scheme. I would request the hon. Minister of Agriculture, who is a largehearted man and who knows the problem of the people, to kindly see how since between 50 and 60 per cent land is with the cultivators, protect the rights of the cultivators at the Government of India level.

The hon. Prime Minister is implementing the *Fasal Bima Yojana*. In our State, our Chief Minister is giving 50 per cent, in addition to the insurance that is given by the Government of India. In our State, we are asking farmers to pay only one rupee. This is giving a lot of comfort to the farmers. Without farmers, there is no life; there is no humanity. Farmer is greater than God, according to me.

I would urge the Government of India, through you, and our beloved hon. Prime Minister to consider giving premium under the

Fasal Bhima Yojana, with a request to kindly make it 100 per cent. Every farmer would be immensely happy with this act. We all feel that the farmer is God. Right from our childhood, we have been saying, '*Jai Kisan*', '*Jai Kisan*. Let us do justice to the farmers by giving crop insurance at the national level by the hon. Prime Minister, through our hon. Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARAMBIR SINGH (BHIWANI-MAHENDRAGARH): Sir, today the entire nation is concerned about how the farmer can survive, and this issue finds place in discussion in almost every Session of this House. I am surprised that some Members of the Opposition, who at one time or another have had the opportunity to run governments in their respective States or elsewhere, speak in such an aggressive manner, as if nothing at all has been done by the BJP Government. The reality is that ever since Hon. Modi Ji implemented MSP and launched the Pradhan Mantri Crop Insurance Scheme, and I speak particularly with reference to my State of Haryana and my own region, we have received far greater benefits under crop insurance in the last four years than in the preceding fifty years. Under MSP, the manner in which the prices of bajra and mustard have been increased, if such increases take place two or three more times, I am confident that farmers will once again be encouraged to move back towards agriculture.

At the same time, it is necessary today that instead of limiting procurement to only 25 percent on behalf of the Union Government, the State Governments should be directed to ensure that every crop covered under MSP is procured grain by grain, so that farmers are able to sell their produce without distress. Given the disputes

surrounding onions in Delhi and across the country today, if we decide to extend MSP to onions as well and fix their prices, I am confident that Haryana alone would be able to meet Delhi's entire demand. It is therefore essential that MSP be implemented for commodities such as tomatoes and onions.

On the other hand, in situations where the Government of India and the FCI are unable to construct warehouses and where State Governments face financial constraints, the amount that the FCI spends annually per quintal on loading, unloading, and maintenance, which is approximately Rs. 500 per quintal, if provided directly to farmers, would prevent foodgrains from being wasted. Farmers would be able to store and maintain the produce properly, and public funds would also be saved.

Through you, I would like to make a humble request to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture that although Food Parks have been allotted to the States, many State Governments have not utilised them so far. At the very least, approval should be granted for one Food Park in each district under every district headquarters, so that small farmers may undertake food processing of vegetables and sustain their families.

Sir, with regard to stubble and crop residues, the Ministry of Environment and the NGT have repeatedly expressed concern. I

submit that if reaper machines are provided to farmers' societies through the Union Government or the State Governments, the fodder generated from stubble can be supplied to gaushalas, thereby ensuring good quality feed for cattle. At present, MGNREGA is applicable to the work of marginal farmers, but lower level officials, particularly at the district level, often do not permit Panchayats to carry out such works. Panchayats remain apprehensive. If clear and proper directions are issued, MGNREGA can be effectively extended to support small farmers. Farmers also rear livestock, as agriculture alone is insufficient for their livelihood. If milk and milk products are brought under MSP, farmers would be able to earn a sustainable income. Similarly, in the case of sprinkler sets and drip irrigation systems, farmers should be allowed to purchase equipment from any company of their choice. Even after subsidy, equipment from another company is often cheaper without subsidy. We must also move more decisively towards organic farming. I humbly submit that farmers practising organic farming should be provided assistance of Rs. 20,000 per acre per year, jointly by the Union Government and the State Governments.

SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR (MUMBAI NORTH WEST):

Chairperson Sir, I am deeply grateful to you for granting me the opportunity to speak on a grave tragedy that recurs year after year. Floods are not merely natural calamities; they are also, to a significant extent, man made. In such disasters, farmers across the country lose not only their crops but also their livestock. The losses they suffer are often beyond repair. Wives and children are rendered destitute, and in the end, farmers are driven to take the extreme step of suicide. In Maharashtra alone, nearly 13,000 farmers have ended their lives. In this context, I wish to place before the House the distressing account of the severe crisis faced by farmers and countless poor families in my home State of Maharashtra.

Sir, during the months of October and November, unseasonal hailstorms and floods shook the entire State of Maharashtra. Agricultural activity in the Konkan region, as well as in Nashik, Aurangabad, Amravati, Nagpur and the Pune region, was completely devastated. In particular, heavy hailstorms occurred during October and November in Sangli, Kolhapur and Satara districts, and in total, 34 districts of the State were affected, covering 23,806 villages. Due to floods and storms, villages, towns and agricultural areas were severely damaged. Standing crops and horticulture spread over approximately 93,89,000 hectares were completely destroyed, and a large number of animals perished. The

scenes were so horrifying that they sent shivers down the spine of anyone who witnessed them, with dead animals lying scattered at various places. As a result of the heavy hailstorms and floods, nearly 1,04,000 farmers suffered extensive losses. The previous Government of Maharashtra had announced compensation of Rs. 8,000 per acre for damage to standing crops and Rs. 18,000 per acre for horticulture, amounting to a total package of Rs. 10,000 crore. Considering the scale of the floods and the devastation caused, the relief amount announced was grossly inadequate. Moreover, even out of the amount announced, only a much smaller portion was actually disbursed. Unfortunately, at that time, Maharashtra was under President's Rule. The Hon. Governor announced whatever relief was possible, but compensation commensurate with the magnitude of losses suffered in Maharashtra was not provided. A new Government has just taken office, and Uddhav Ji has begun work and has already taken decisions regarding the assistance to be provided to farmers. Through this House, I would like to request the Union Government to protect the farmers of Maharashtra from the devastation caused by cyclones. ...*(Interruptions)* Sir, only three minutes and 26 seconds have elapsed. Kindly grant me two more minutes to speak. I also would like to speak about fishermen. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Conclude in four minutes.

SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR: Sir, actually it is I who proposed this discussion. My name appeared in today's List of Business. Unfortunately, I could not come in time. So, please give me two minutes and I will conclude.

[Translation]

Chairperson Sir, due to the damage caused by cyclones and floods, farmers have been pushed into a pitiable condition. In view of this, I would like to urge the Union Government to announce a relief package of at least Rs. 40,000 crore for farmers. Instead of providing Rs. 8,000 per hectare for agriculture, compensation of Rs. 20,000 per hectare should be given, and instead of Rs. 18,000 per hectare for horticulture, compensation of Rs. 30,000 per hectare should be immediately provided to the affected farmers, so that they may receive some measure of relief. In addition, taxes levied on agricultural produce should be reduced, school fees of farmers' children should be waived, interest on agricultural loans should be completely waived, and the repayment of agricultural loans should be deferred until the next season and harvest. Electricity bills for agricultural pump sets should also be waived. Under the Rojgar Hami Yojana, more employment opportunities should be provided

to farmers and members of affected families. Sir, due to unseasonal hailstorms and floods, the rural economy has been completely shattered. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Ritesh Pandey Ji, this is not going on record. Please begin your remarks.

*...(Interruptions)**

SHRI RITESH PANDEY (AMBEDKAR NAGAR):
Chairperson Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this discussion. Sir, in the rural areas of our country, the highest rate of employment is in agriculture. Nearly 70 percent of the population is engaged in farming and agricultural activities. It is therefore evident that when national data shows a decline in the purchase of food items in rural areas, it directly indicates that farmers are facing a serious crisis. I have repeatedly stated, and other Members have also pointed out, that the primary reasons for this situation are climate change, along with certain flawed policies of the Government.

If one looks at the foremost issue, agriculture is being most severely affected by stray cattle. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, and particularly in my district of Ambedkar Nagar within my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, the menace of stray cattle has increased to such an extent that they have destroyed almost every crop. Along with this, there has recently been prolonged rainfall, which led to the spread of a fungal disease known in English as rice

*Not recorded.

blast. Due to this, fungus affected the paddy crop, the rice grains turned black, and they could not be sold in the market. This resulted in very heavy losses for the farmers. However, no survey was conducted under the Fasal Bima Yojana in this regard, and farmers suffered immense losses. It is extremely necessary for the Hon. Minister to take cognisance of this matter.

Sir, climate change is having a particularly adverse impact on the monsoon. As a result, there are instances of drought, and when the monsoon does arrive, it often does so with excessive intensity. This has been witnessed recently in Maharashtra, where it has been reported that cotton and soybean crops were destroyed, causing severe losses to farmers.

Similarly, in eastern Uttar Pradesh, widespread damage occurs whenever drought conditions prevail. When such significant changes take place in monsoon patterns, it becomes imperative for the Government to take serious cognisance of the situation and allocate substantial resources to address climate change. Considerable funds have been provided for the welfare of farmers, which is indeed a positive step. However, unless we undertake comprehensive research on climate change and formulate effective and forward looking policies, in line with global efforts, these challenges will persist. Glaciers in the Himalayas are continuously melting, and their impact is being felt across the world. If we fail to

address this issue with the seriousness it demands, and if, as the world's largest democracy, we do not assume a leadership role in confronting climate change, it could lead to grave and lasting consequences for our country.

Sir, my earnest submission is that climate change has a particularly severe impact on farmers, because when monsoon patterns change, even today nearly 60 to 70 percent of farmers are entirely dependent on the monsoon for irrigation. I therefore urge that this matter be taken seriously and that a comprehensive policy on climate change be formulated, as several other speakers have also suggested, so that its adverse effects may be mitigated over the next 50 years and our farmers may be protected. Sir, the issue of pension for farmers has also been raised in this House. In view of the damage caused to crops by stray animals, I request that farmers be compensated at least through a pension. Providing a pension of more than Rs. 10,000 would offer meaningful relief to farmers. Thank you very much.

SHRI RAMULU POTHUGANTI (NAGARKURNOOL): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on farmers' issues under Rule 193.

Sir, this is the first occasion on which I am speaking in this House. Therefore, I request that I may be given five minutes' time.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude your remarks within four minutes.

SHRI RAMULU POTHUGANTI: Sir, I seek permission to speak in my mother tongue, Telugu.

[English]

*Sir, after we got independence, our Governments tried to bring about a Green Revolution by implementing the Five Year Plans. Though, we succeeded to some extent, we needed to put in a lot of effort to achieve our goals. The farmers are the back-bone of our country. Agriculture depends on nature. Around 60-70% of our population depends on agriculture who are providing food to our nation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Government to take care of those farmers who are feeding the entire country. Due to untimely rains, droughts and floods, farmers are suffering huge losses and are committing suicides, as the Government is not

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Telugu.

providing them relief in time. The banks are also not giving loans to farmers on time. I request the Government that instead of making farmers run after the banks for loans, bankers should be made to visit villages and facilitate loans to all needy farmers. It is the moral responsibility of the Government to protect our farmers.

Similarly, allied sectors of agriculture like animal husbandry, dairy farming, poultries, fisheries, etc should also be encouraged by the government. In this direction, there is a need to declare a 'National Policy' for agriculture in our country and save our farmers. Prominent agricultural scientist Dr. Swaminathan's Committee, made some recommendations for determining Minimum Support Price for agricultural produce. The Government should see that those recommendations are implemented in letter and spirit to provide better MSP to our farmers.

Whenever, there is a natural calamity, the Central Government sends teams to assess the damage/loss in that region, after the State Government sends a report. This takes two to three months after a calamity strikes. Relief should be provided immediately in such circumstances without much delay. There is an urgent need to mechanise agriculture. We should provide sophisticated machines to farmers. MGNREGA should be linked with agriculture to help farmers in the long run. There is a need to increase MSP for crops. We should also encourage horticulture. I can proudly say that in our

state Telengana our Chief Minister Shri K Chandrashekhar Rao is emerging as a role model in implementing welfare schemes for farmers. Many major projects, like KLA, Ranga Reddy & Kaleshwaram were completed in four years. Sir, I come from farmer's family. Through these irrigation projects around 1,20,00,000 acres of land was brought under irrigation. For farmers, Rs.10,000 per acre is being provided as input cost. Crop loans are also being provided to the farmers.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN (KHEDA): Chairperson Sir, today the House is discussing crop losses and their impact on farmers under Rule 193. I am grateful to you for granting me permission to speak on this important subject. Sir, India is an agrarian country. The livelihood of nearly 60 percent of our population depends on agriculture related activities, and it is for this very reason that India is described as an agriculture based nation. Sir, in the 72 years since Independence, this country has witnessed nearly twenty two Governments and 15 Prime Ministers. However, it is the good fortune of India that it has been led by a Prime Minister like the revered Narendra Modi Ji, who served for twelve years as an able and experienced Chief Minister of a single State. After assuming office as the Prime Minister, his experience as the Chief Minister of Gujarat has greatly benefited the nation. Sir, this country faces several challenges. Hon. Modi Ji has spent nights in more than four hundred districts across the country. After understanding the agricultural problems of the nation in a comprehensive and far sighted manner, he introduced schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Vikas Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, and several other initiatives. From the Soil Health Card to various farm to market schemes, a wide range of programmes have been launched under his leadership. Sir, when

Hon. Modi Ji was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, the agricultural growth rate of the State was almost negative. After he assumed office, through his competence and vision, he raised Gujarat's agricultural growth rate to more than 10 percent. Even Dr. Swaminathan had observed that the work being done for agriculture by Narendra Bhai Modi as the Chief Minister of Gujarat ought to be emulated across the country. Today, as the Prime Minister of India, he has launched numerous schemes for the welfare of agriculture and farmers. Sir, today we are deliberating upon crop losses. Crop losses occur due to floods, hailstorms, drought, deficient or excessive rainfall, as well as damage caused by animals and pests. These losses have a particularly severe impact on rural life and livelihoods.

It was to safeguard farmers that the Hon. Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Considerable improvements have been made over the earlier insurance schemes. I would like to place before the House a small but important suggestion for further strengthening this scheme. Many experienced Members present here share the view that if we genuinely wish to protect farmers and ensure proper compensation for crop losses, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana should be implemented through State run insurance mechanisms rather than through private companies. When States operate their own

insurance systems, they already possess a complete administrative framework, ranging from the Patwari to the Tehsildar. Through this mechanism, village level records, including crop cutting data maintained in villages, can be accurately verified. If crop cutting records are correctly maintained, compensation can genuinely reach those farmers who have actually suffered losses.

At a time when the impact of climate change is extremely severe, it is December and yet Gujarat is still receiving rainfall. Due to this unprecedented impact of climate change, Gujarat has suffered massive losses, the likes of which have been witnessed after nearly 40 years. In this context, a historic decision has been taken by the sensitive and experienced Chief Minister of Gujarat, Vijay Bhai Rupani Ji. By announcing a relief package of approximately Rs. 4,000 crore, both farmers covered under insurance and those not covered under insurance have been included. As a result, nearly 56 lakh farmers from about 18,000 villages across 248 blocks and 33 districts of Gujarat are set to benefit from this assistance. I firmly believe that in the times to come, the manner in which the experienced Chief Minister of Gujarat has acted....(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude your remarks.

SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN: Sir, I am concluding. There were around 130 dams whose construction had been initiated by previous Governments, but they were left incomplete. Some were completed only up to 30 percent, some up to 40 percent, and others up to 50 percent, after which the remaining dam projects were abandoned. Hon. Modi Ji has ensured the completion of 100 out of the 130 dams. In Gujarat, three major dams have been completed, including two in Rajkot and one in Jamnagar. I am confident that in the times ahead, with regard to existing irrigation schemes, there are provisions both with premium and without premium. In the same manner, insurance schemes should also clearly distinguish between coverage with premium and without premium. Only if the Government of Gujarat, or any other State Government, establishes its own insurance company and maintains its own village level records, can we ensure that farmers receive benefits in a truly effective and transparent manner.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SADANAND SULE (BARAMATI): Sir, I will speak for only two minutes. I have three or four brief suggestions and questions, and I would appreciate it if I could receive clarification on them. I come from the State of Maharashtra, which this year has faced both severe drought and devastating floods. Therefore, irrespective of the policies adopted, these calamities have created immense hardship for farmers not only in Maharashtra but also in several other States across the country. At present, the most pressing issue being discussed across the States is evident everywhere. Whether one switches on the television, visits a farmer's household, or goes to any home in urban areas, only one issue dominates public concern, and that is onions. The major share of the country's onion supply comes from my State. The Lasalgaon area of Nashik, of which the Hon. Minister is well aware, had a good crop three or four months ago. At that time, farmers had requested that decisions regarding export permissions, which are taken by the Ministry of Commerce, be taken expeditiously. That demand was raised then, but for reasons best known to the Government, a timely decision was not taken. Thereafter, floods occurred, and subsequently the crop yield declined sharply. As we all come from farming backgrounds, it is well known that onion cultivation is largely undertaken by small and marginal farmers with limited land holdings, and it requires comparatively less water.

The crop can be harvested three or four times a year. Had export permissions been granted at the appropriate time, when the crop was available in abundance, the present situation could perhaps have been avoided. My humble request to the Government is that onion farmers should be subjected to regular and systematic monitoring. Only when a balance is maintained between urban price stability and farmers' income can a sustainable solution be achieved. Therefore, just as Minimum Support Price is ensured for wheat and paddy, if a clear and transparent policy is framed for onion farmers, it would provide substantial relief to them and also help in controlling onion prices in urban markets.

Sir, on the issue of climate change, several Members have already spoken. I would like to add only a brief caveat. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has a large pool of scientists, and in my own Parliamentary Constituency there is also a major scientific institution run by the Union Government. However, a significant number of scientific posts remain vacant. Yesterday, in Shrimati Nirmala Ji's speech, there was a reference to the Government considering the use of radiation in the context of onions. My limited request is that the Government may clearly spell out its firm policy in this regard. When it comes to research, particularly on genetically engineered crops, it is often reported that the Government's approach appears hesitant or opposed. Clarity on

this issue is therefore essential. What is the Government's policy on taking forward research on GE brinjal, potato, and similar crops, especially with the objective of achieving higher productivity with reduced water usage? If some clarification could be provided on the future course of action, it would be extremely helpful. As far as ICAR is concerned, there is no shortage of talent whatsoever; however, many scientific positions remain vacant. Filling these vacancies would greatly strengthen agricultural research and benefit farmers across the country.

Sir, I would like to make one final and important submission, particularly with reference to my State. Under the present circumstances, farmers are facing extreme distress. They are unable to pay their children's school fees, unable to purchase essential medicines, and even the most basic household expenses have become unmanageable. In such a situation, an approach was adopted earlier when the Government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh implemented a complete loan waiver. I would like to ask whether the present Government is considering a similar comprehensive measure. Further, when fresh agricultural loans are extended, they should be structured in a well planned, farmer friendly, and sustainable manner. During our tenure, the Maharashtra Government and the Union Government together had provided agricultural loans at zero interest. If a similar initiative can be

considered once again, it would provide substantial relief to farmers who are struggling under severe financial pressure. I would like to urge the Government to reflect on this matter. This is my humble appeal on behalf of farmers across the country.

[English]

***DR. SUJAY VIKHE PATIL (AHMEDNAGAR):** Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak. I am thankful to our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji for implementing so many schemes for farmers like PM Kisan Samman Nidhi under which Rs.6000 per year is given to farmers. PM Kisan Mandhan Yojana is a pension scheme under which Rs.3000 would be given to farmers and there are many more to mention but due to time constraints I would not talk about them. I would make only 2-3 points. PM crop insurance scheme was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Modiji but it has lots of lacunae. It is mandatory for the insurance companies to give compensation to the farmers facing natural calamities. But not the government, the insurance companies are at fault. The insurance agents are not available when we need them most. They are very arrogant and not ready to cooperate with our farmers. Our government has infused a lot of money in these insurance companies to do justice to the farmers but unfortunately they are not doing justice and playing with the sentiments of farmers.

The insurance companies who have awarded the contracts of insurance should be more helpful and positive. They must have

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

sufficient number of agents. The insurance claims should be settled within stipulated time. If they fail to settle the claims within the fixed time they should be liable to pay the interest at 12% per month.

Most of the MPs in this House talked about heavy rains and destruction of standing crops of around 54.22 lac hectare of land. The crops like onions, soyabean, maize, barely, millet, grapes etc have got completely devastated. Government of Maharashtra helped them with some terms and conditions; but that was not sufficient. A three party Government had been formed in Maharashtra. I would like to request them to fulfil their poll promises. I would also like to urge upon our Hon'ble PM to provide the monetary assistance of Rs.5000 per hectare.

The issue of flood is also very important and very serious to. Our ex-Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee dreamt of interlinking of rivers. This project should be implemented immediately. In my Ahmadnagar Constituency, if the water of Godawari river is diverted it would definitely improve the irrigation facilities. I believe that under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modiji justice would be done to the farmers of this country.

Thank you.

ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE (IDUKKI): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion under Rule 193. In the previous Lok Sabha Session, I asked a question related to the rate of farmers' suicide in the country. Unfortunately, the reply given was indifferent. The Ministry of Agriculture did not have any data on this. We had to approach the Crime Records Bureau to get the details. If this is the state of affairs, then how will the Government achieve the target of doubling the income of farmers by the year 2022? Not having enough data about farmers indicates the pathetic situation of the farming community. The issues of farmers differ from State to State. We have to adopt State-centric policies for resolving the issues of farmers.

The economy of our area is based on agriculture. The notable cultivations are pepper, cardamom, rubber, tea etc. The drastic fall in prices of these commodities have affected their livelihood. They are struggling to meet their financial obligations. Sir, I hail from Idukki district in Kerala. Kerala is a flood-affected State and I can say one thing that more than 11,000 hectares of agricultural land was washed away during the last floods. Thousands of households have been destroyed and seventy people have lost their lives due to flood and other natural calamities. As a side effect, our crops and plants got infected with deadly diseases. This resulted in low

production and consequently the income of farmers also went down and similarly they lost their repayment capacity. The unfortunate thing is that during that time only the bank authorities started confiscation process. Having no other way, our farmers committed suicide. In my district 10 farmers committed suicide and all over the State the number is 30. It is unfortunate to report that even yesterday one farmer committed suicide. We have to adopt policies that help in income generation of farmers. We have to adopt income generation policies. The suicide rate of farmers is low now only because of the moratorium policy. Whenever the moratorium policy is withdrawn by the State Government, maybe, the temptation of committing suicide may restart.

Sir, I am reminding this day about the loan waiver policy of UPA Government and Congress-ruled States. I will go ahead with my speech by referring to certain points. As far as pepper farmers in my area are concerned, there has been a drastic fall in the price of pepper in 2019 as compared to the price in 2017. It is Rs. 290 per kilogram now. The provisions of the South Asian Foreign Trade Agreement permit Sri Lanka to export 2500 tonnes without any duty. This import from Sri Lanka to our domestic market is affecting our pepper farmers. So, the MIP of pepper should be increased by Rs. 750. I am also requesting a pepper cluster for Idukki District by way of this discussion.

As far as cardamom farmers are concerned, the price of cardamom is little bit high but due to low production, there is no benefit for the farmers. The Minister of Commerce, Shri Piyush Goyal announced Idukki as cardamom cluster but the benefits are not yet received by the farmers even today. The Spices Board Field Offices closed earlier have not been reopened so far. More than 90 per cent of rubber production is from Kerala. We have to address the issues of rubber farmers by increasing the MSP to at least Rs. 200 per kilogram.

[Translation]

***SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV (BULDHANA):** Hon. Chairperson, Sir, today I would like to speak in my mother tongue, Marathi. [English] Hon'ble Chairman Sir, thank you very much I would like to speak in my mother tongue Marathi. Unseasonal rain lashed Maharashtra in the month of September-October and out of 36 districts 34 districts got badly affected. We lost our crops and cattle. The farmers throughout Maharashtra are facing severe troubles due to this. As far as my Buldhana district is concerned around 6 lakh farmers have got directly affected. We had never witnessed such kind of situation. Earlier there was a drought like situation but now we are facing floods.

Farmers were expecting good returns this season as the rain was satisfactory initially. They might be planning for higher education and marriages of their children and even repaying their loans. But the unseasonal and heavy rains which continued for 20-22 days washed the standing crops completely. In this way their dreams got shattered. Hence, these farmers are expecting some kind of help from the State and Union Government.

During President's Rule in Maharashtra monetary assistance of Rs.8000 per acre was announced. But it was like a mockery to the

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

farmers. At least, Rs.25000 per hectare should be given. The State Government should come forward to help them. I would also like to demand the Central Government to give a Rs.40000 crore relief assistance to the farmers of Maharashtra.

This government has taken many courageous decisions like repealing article 370 and Triple Talaq. Now, some kind of courage should be shown for implementing Dr. Swaminathan Commission Report.

Our Ex-Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri ji gave the slogan “*Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan*”. Today, our soldiers are killing one another and farmers are committing suicides. Around 243 farmers committed suicide in my Buldhana District. If we really want to stop there suicides, State and Central Governments should extend adequate help to these distressed and needy farmers.

Farmers in Maharashtra are expecting a total loan waiver and State Government act accordingly. Central Government should also come forward to play its role. This is my earnest request to the Union Government.

Thank you.

19.00 hrs

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Members, 10 Hon. Members are still remaining to participate in the discussion. If it is the sense of the House, I would like to request that the sitting of the House be extended either until the discussion by these 10 Members is completed or for a period of one hour.

OTHER HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Very well. The sitting of the House is extended for one hour. Shri Devji M. Patel.

Hon. Member, your microphone has been switched off.

...(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Jadhav Ji, your remarks are not being recorded.

*...(Interruptions)**

SHRI DEVAJI PATEL (JALORE): Chairperson Sir, just as there is a well known saying about Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, in the same spirit today, under Rule 193, we are deliberating in this august House on the Annadata. I am sincerely grateful to you for granting me the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Chairperson Sir, Lal Bahadur Shastri Ji had once said that when the country faces a shortage of foodgrains, people should forego one meal so that food production may increase and the nation may be saved from hunger. The farmers of our country rose to that call and fulfilled their responsibility. Yet today, those very farmers are facing severe distress. Earlier, any activity or occasion in a farmer's household revolved around foodgrains. As several previous speakers have rightly stated, the farmer sustains us as the Annadata by producing foodgrains. There may be many who possess immense wealth, but I repeatedly emphasise that wealth alone cannot sustain life; it is foodgrains, produced by our farmers, that are essential for survival. For nearly 54 years, Governments led by the Congress were in power. Many Members present here belong to farming families. It is true that some may have later taken up other professions, but the reality is that during all those years, there was little serious discussion on the deepening poverty of farmers. Today, when after 2014 Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has taken meaningful and positive steps in the interest of farmers, some

people have begun to ask only for statistics. It is true that there are certain pending issues in the schemes meant for farmers, and those matters must certainly be discussed. Earlier, if one took a sack of bajra to the market, it would fetch one tola of gold. Today, even if one takes 27 sacks of the same bajra, it may perhaps fetch only one tola of gold. While the price of gold has increased over time, foodgrains were neglected and kept undervalued for nearly 54 years. The manner in which Hon. Modi Ji has worked in recent times to promote bajra and other foodgrains, had similar efforts been made earlier, perhaps even today one sack of bajra would have fetched one tola of gold. Ultimately, it is foodgrains that sustain our lives. Many people speak about what should or should not be done for farmers. However, the reality is that if the son of a farmer wishes to pursue education, even today he is often unable to study in a private school. Perhaps the son of a large farmer may be able to do so, but the son of an ordinary farmer cannot. At the root of this problem lies income. While income may come from agriculture, it is dependent on water, and therefore concerns relating to water must be addressed with priority.

We have spoken about the linking of rivers, an initiative that was started by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. Today, one of my colleagues mentioned that floods occur frequently. Floods occur because we have obstructed the natural flow of water. The flow that

has been obstructed must be restored in a systematic and scientific manner. This has been successfully demonstrated in Gujarat through the construction of check dams. Subsequently, similar initiatives have also been undertaken in Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

We must make the farmer prosperous. Even today, the average annual income of a farmer is only around Rs. 36,000 to Rs. 48,000. A labourer is available at a daily wage ranging from Rs. 350 to Rs. 500. One may go and ask any farmer that if he needs a labourer, he has to pay at least Rs. 350 per day. In a farmer's household, generally four members are engaged in agricultural work. If we calculate this as per MGNREGA norms, at Rs. 350 per day for 100 days, one person earns Rs. 35,000, and for four persons it comes to Rs. 1,40,000. In contrast, the total income of a farmer's household is only about Rs. 35,000. Why should MGNREGA not be linked with agriculture? If, through MGNREGA, income reaches every farmer's household and every farmer's bank account for at least one family unit, only then can we truly make the farmer prosperous.

Sir, the Hon. Prime Minister has launched a very effective and laudable scheme in the form of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Many of my colleagues would have witnessed its benefits. I would like to place on record my gratitude that under this scheme, only a few days ago, an amount of Rs. 300 crore was credited directly to the accounts of farmers in my district. For this timely

assistance, I sincerely thank the Government. However, I would like to add a small but important suggestion. At present, when crops are damaged, farmers are required to inform the insurance company through a helpline within 72 hours. This is often impractical for farmers, especially in rural areas. Instead, a simple four digit helpline number should be issued, which farmers can easily remember. Further, the insurance company should be assigned to a particular area for a minimum period of three years, and an office should be established in every block. Through these offices, if photographs of every field and every khasra number are taken and properly recorded, compensation can genuinely reach the affected farmers, and only then can farmers truly become prosperous.

Sir, I would also like to draw attention to the issue of water. There is an acute water scarcity in my region. The scheme for recharge of the Jawai system from the Sabarmati basin should be implemented without delay. If excess water from the Sabarmati is diverted to the dams located in the Sirohi region, then farmers in Sirohi, Pindwara, and Reodar would receive significant benefit.

Sir, since the waters of the Mahi are being utilised in Gujarat, I would like to place a modest request before you. Earlier, an agreement had been reached that once Narmada water became available, Rajasthan would receive water from the Mahi. My humble submission is that if it is not feasible to provide Mahi water,

as it would involve a very large project, then even the supply of Narmada water to Jalore district through the Dantiwada and Sipu dams would be of immense benefit. This would ensure drinking water as well as irrigation facilities for the people of Bhinmal and Raniwara. With these words, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

[English]

DR. BEESETTI VENKATA SATYAVATHI

(ANAKAPALLE): Sir, thank you for allowing me to speak on a very important topic of post-harvest facilities. Every year, farmers lose around Rs. 63,000 crore for not being able to sell their produce for which they have already made investments. Except for cold storage, the country is lagging behind in all other agri-logistics required to bring the produce from farm to markets.

Another major proposal which can ensure that crop losses are minimised is to shift from road to rail for transportation of all perishable products, horticulture produce, and sensitive handling of demand and also adequate transportation support. As per the National Horticulture Board, in the absence of robust and sustainable logistic mechanism, more than half of fruits and vegetables end up as waste even before they arrive in the market, especially tomatoes at Anantapur and Kadapa districts in Andhra Pradesh. However, the vegetables and fruits are categorized as perishable products which need a provision for fastest transportation with storage at the receiving front. It should also be noted that the perishables must not be stored at production centres, but moved to places while still fresh and firm to withstand the rigours of transport.

It is heard that the Indian Railways, with its Pan India network, is the optimal and preferred choice for movement of horticultural produce. Yet, this exploding demand is not tapped or planned for, in full. Among the top 21 commodities moved by rail and road, fruits and vegetables have the lowest share there.

Sabhapati-ji, we cannot change the climate and its side effects on the crops as it is not in our hands. However, we can change whatever is possible, like increasing transportation from road to rail and by building more post harvest facilities.

So, through you, Sabhapati-ji, I would request the Central Government to take proper steps to reduce the crop losses and increase the farmers' income.

With these few words, I conclude. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

SHRI PARBATBHAI SAVABHAI PATEL

(BANASKANTHA): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I rise to speak in the discussion on 'Loss of crops and its impact on farmers' under Rule 193. First of all, I thank you. Everyone talked about the farmers. Today, I ask you for permission to speak in Gujarati.

[English]

*Hon'ble Chairman Sir, today all Hon'ble members expressed their concern for the farmers of whole nation. I want to say that those who were in power for many years i.e. 55 years, they did not care for the farmers during that time. After Shri Narendra Modiji came to power, they started showing concern for farmers. Not only after coming to Delhi but when Shri Narendra Modiji was Chief Minister in Gujarat, he started 'Krushi Mahotsav' (Agriculture Festival) from the year 2005. Considering the problems faced by farmers in different parts of Gujarat, he established four agriculture universities in four different parts of the State. After becoming Prime Minister in 2014, if somebody has really cared for farmers, it is our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modiji. A farmer is called father of the whole universe.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Gujarati.

As mentioned by the Hon'ble member Devjibhai, we cannot survive without food and farmers cultivate food grains for us. Agriculture provides highest employment in the country no matter how many industries we may have. Sixty percent people are getting employment from agriculture. But farmers are facing many problems like flood, drought, unseasonal rain, cyclone, etc. and among all these problems, if I talk about the current year, it was very nice year for the farmers of the whole nation and they were expecting bumper produce and the crops were almost ready but suddenly the nature gave them a blow in form of unseasonal rains and this caused a lot of damage to the farmers. Farmers suffered losses in crops like cotton, millet, peanuts, castor, mung, etc.

I want to mention here that the Gujarat Government awarded compensation of Rs. 4,000/- to the farmers who sustained loss due to unseasonal rain and it is a historical step and therefore I congratulate and thank the Chief Minister Vijaybhai Rupani and his government. Moreover, rates of electricity applicable to the motors pumps of 7.5 HP were also applied to motor pumps of higher horsepower and this way also the government helped the farmers. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is a very good scheme for farmers. But there are some shortcomings in the scheme which need to be corrected by taking policy measures. There is one provision that the farmers should inform within 72 hours. I have a suggestion

that this time limit should be increased. The farmer will get insurance amount only if he informs about the loss in time so we need to give more time to the farmers.

Farmers are given Rs.6,000/- as a part of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana and it is an unprecedented scheme. Minimum Support Price, Soil Health Card, supporting farmers during drought and floods, compensating soil erosion and crop failure, etc. are very good steps taken by Shri Narendra Modiji and his government. But we need to take more steps for the betterment of farmers. At present farmers are given financial support under various schemes; for example Rs. 6,000/- are given under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana. I request that all these schemes should be clubbed to make them more effective. MNREGA scheme should also be connected with farmers because they work very hard in their farms. The shortcomings in Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana should be rectified. I also request the government to take steps to prevent rain water flowing into sea.

[Translation]

SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL (SATARA): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity. I come from the Satara region. During the recent floods, vast areas along the Bhima, Krishna, Warana and Panchganga rivers, including parts of Satara, Sangli, Solapur and the Bhima river belt, were submerged. In my region, sugarcane cultivation is extensive, with at least 40 to 45 sugar factories operating. Sugarcane can withstand submergence for a day and still survive the next, but this time it remained under water for nearly ten days. As a result, sugarcane production has declined significantly, and I believe that this year the cultivators' share of income has been reduced by almost half.

Milk from our region is supplied as far as Delhi. Due to the death of livestock, milk production has fallen sharply. Poultry numbers have declined, resulting in reduced egg production. In horticulture as well, the output of pomegranates and other vegetables has decreased. I would like to inform the House that when Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji was the Prime Minister, I was serving as the Collector of Pune. At that time, onions sent to the market were not fetching even ten paise. Large quantities of onions lay unsold, began to rot in the heat, and an expenditure of Rs. 3 lakh had to be incurred merely to bury them. If the Government can

assess in advance which crops are likely to be produced, the expected levels of production, and the potential returns to cultivators through exports, then appropriate policies should be formulated without delay.

When I was the Governor of Sikkim, a pension scheme for cultivators was introduced. I would like to urge other States to also think seriously about the welfare of cultivators, because only then will they truly benefit. My request is that the loans of farmers who have suffered losses should either be waived or restructured into smaller instalments, so that they receive immediate relief and the burden of interest is reduced.

There is likely to be a substantial sugarcane crop this year. However, if agriculture is affected next year due to water related constraints, further problems will arise. Therefore, it is essential to begin planning from now itself as to how these challenges will be addressed in the coming year. Thank you.

[English]

***SHRI BHAGWANT MANN (SANGRUR):** I thank you, Hon'ble Chairman Sir. I will speak in my mother-tongue, Punjabi.

Sir, Punjab is an agrarian state. The farmers of Punjab used to feed the entire country after Green Revolution. However, today, he is hungry and neck-deep in debt. Sir, under the MNREGA Scheme, the farmer can work in his own field and can get the money under this Scheme. However, there is no awareness and publicity of this scheme and the farmers are in the dark.

Sir, Punjab has been named as the land of five rivers. However, the groundwater level in Punjab has gone down to the depth of 600 to 700 foot below the ground. Experts are of the opinion that in the coming 15 to 20 years, Punjab may turn into a desert.

Sir, we are ready to alter the sowing of our crops. Our farmers are ready to sow maize, pearl millet, sunflower etc. Ours is a fertile land. However, these alternative crops do not have a Minimum Support Price. MSP is given for paddy etc. Hence, these alternative crops should also have remunerative MSP.

Sir, perishable vegetables like tomatoes and potatoes sometimes have a bumper growth. However, due to the glut, they

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

have to be thrown on the roads as no one buys these vegetables. In Punjab and Maharashtra, this happens. If these vegetables could be exported, that will be very helpful for the farmers.

Sir, when crops fail or are damaged due to natural calamities, the compensation to be provided to the farmers becomes a joke. Meager amount cheque of Rs.26/- or Rs.70/- is granted to the hapless farmers. So, timely and proper compensation should be provided to the farmers.

Sir, the Delhi Government of Shri Arvind Kejriwal has paid compensation to farmers in line with Swaminathan Report. Although, States cannot implement Swaminathan Committee Report, but Shri Arvind Kejriwal has given the hapless farmers that much amount as MSP. He has given Rs.20,000/- per acre to the farmers for the damaged crops. Sir, a noted poet of Punjabi Shri Sant Ram Udasi has written:

“The Jat farmer is crying

Water is overflowing everywhere

Misfortune is what he gets

he is left with chaff only”

This means, in the natural calamity, the crops are destroyed and the Jat farmer is left with nothing. He is neck-deep in debt already. Misfortune is what he gets. Sir, the children of farmers should get other jobs so that they are not dependant on farming and agriculture. Untimely heavy rains for half and hour can wreak havoc on the food-grains sowed by him.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN: Sir, the farmers of Punjab have always fed millions of people in our country. However, they are in distress at present. The country must come to the aid of the farmers of Punjab. Thankyou.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY(AJMER): Chairperson Sir, I express my sincere gratitude to you for giving me the opportunity, under Rule 193, to participate in the discussion on farmers, the Annadata of this country. Sir, 72 years have passed since our country attained Independence. Today, the Annadata of the nation is distressed and suffering. If there is any section of society in India that is in deep anguish today, it is the farming community. A farmer has no caste; every person living in a village is, in one way or another, connected with farming. Yet, why is the condition of the farmer so deplorable today? Sir, at this moment, the Opposition benches appear completely vacant.

Chairperson Sir, I would like to illustrate my point with an example from the year 1975. At that time, diesel was priced at 95 paise per litre, and bajra sold at Rs. 2 per kilogram. To understand the severe deterioration in the financial condition of farmers today, it is essential to examine this issue at its roots. While in 1975 diesel cost 95 paise per litre and bajra was Rs. 2 per kilogram, we all know what the prices of diesel and bajra are today. The cost of inputs for farmers has risen sharply, but the prices of their produce have not increased in the same proportion. We are indeed fortunate that the Hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Bhai Modi Ji, has increased the Minimum Support Price for agricultural produce. The Congress

should introspect. They governed the country for 55 to 60 years, but what meaningful steps did they take for farmers? Today, the farmer's livelihood rests primarily on two pillars, agriculture and livestock.

Today the situation is such that within a farmer's enclosure lie his agricultural implements, fodder, and livestock. If fodder worth Rs. 10 lakh is destroyed, only now has some provision for assistance been introduced. I have been informed of this. When I became a Member of the Legislative Assembly in 2003 and entered the House, the assistance provided was merely Rs. 1,500. Why should salt be rubbed into the farmers' wounds? The Congress has pushed farmers into ruin. What does the farmer need today? I am speaking specifically with reference to Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, if only the rivers are linked, a substantial solution can be achieved. With regard to MGNREGA, I would like to state that a large section of the common people has lost its sense of self respect. There has been a decline in the dignity of labour, and people have become reluctant to work. ...*(Interruptions)* Chairperson Sir, I will not take much time. I am referring to MGNREGA. Today, agriculture has suffered greatly due to MGNREGA. Under this scheme, the sense of dignity associated with work has been weakened. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now please conclude your remarks and offer your suggestions.

SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY: I am giving my suggestions. MGNREGA should be linked with agriculture. The Government should make appropriate amendments in MGNREGA and farmers should be brought within its ambit. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The Minister to present the Report of Business Advisory Committee.

19.26 hrs

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11th Report

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): Sir, I beg to present the Eleventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

HON. MEMBER: I request all Hon. Members to conclude your speech in two and a half minutes.

Shri Jasbir Singh Gill.

19.27 hrs

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Crop loss due to various reasons and its impact on farmers-

Contd...

SHRI JASBIR SINGH GILL (KHADOOR SAHIB): Sir, the farmer of Punjab, who has fed the entire nation by working barefoot in biting cold, even risking his life, is today being driven to the brink of despair. I would like to submit that there are three or four major challenges which need urgent attention. First, there are four rivers flowing through our region. Dams should be constructed along the banks of all four rivers, namely the Beas, Ravi, Sutlej and Ghaggar. Whenever there is heavy rainfall, floods occur, destroying lakhs of acres of standing crops and washing away fertile land, thereby causing enormous losses to farmers. Secondly, there is an urgent need for a crop audit. By crop audit, I mean a scientific assessment of the actual requirement of various crops, such as how much potato, paddy, wheat, bajra and maize are needed. Based on such an assessment, farmers should be guided to cultivate crops in accordance with national demand. Thirdly, Punjab produces vegetables of excellent quality. Earlier, trade through Pakistan enabled exports to Afghanistan and other neighbouring countries,

but that route is now closed. Punjab is a landlocked State, yet it produces a wide variety of high quality vegetables, ranging from broccoli to lettuce. If arrangements are made for export through air cargo, particularly via the Amritsar International Airport, it would greatly benefit Punjab's farmers.

Sir, the Hon. Minister of Animal Husbandry, Shri Giriraj Singh Ji, is present in the House today. I would like to make a specific request to him. Farmers in our border areas have very small landholdings, and for some time now.... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude your remarks.

SHRI JASBIR SINGH GILL: Sir, in those areas, farmers have taken up poultry and other allied activities. If a Veterinary Science University is established in the border area, it would enable our farmers to engage in additional livelihoods alongside agriculture. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA (UJJAIN): Chairperson Sir, today a very important discussion is taking place in this House on the problems faced by farmers. However, it pains me deeply that the party which ruled this country for 55 years has its benches lying vacant when farmers' issues are being discussed. The opposition came to the streets...*. In Madhya Pradesh they...* claiming that farmers are in distress and demanding relief for them. I would like to express my gratitude to our Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, and also thank the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar Ji, who, upon our request, sanctioned Rs. 1,000 crore to the Government of Madhya Pradesh as relief assistance. If one truly considers who showed genuine concern for the Annadata over the last seventy years, it was the former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji, who did so by linking farmers through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, contributing to the development of villages, and ensuring that farmers' produce could be transported from villages to the mandis. He also made sincere efforts to ensure that farmers received remunerative prices for their produce. If anyone worked to free farmers from the clutches of moneylenders by providing them with the Kisan Credit Card, it was Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. After him, if anyone has truly shown

*Not recorded

concern for the Annadata, it is our Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji. Hon. Prime Minister Ji introduced the Kisan Samman Nidhi and ensured the provision of Rs. 6,000 per year to farmers. For farmers in their old age, those above 60 years who are no longer able to work, a pension of Rs. 3,000 is being provided under the Pradhan Mantri Maandhan Yojana. Hon. Prime Minister Ji has ensured income security for farmers. He also launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, through which lakhs of farmers are benefitting today. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana was launched, through which lakhs of farmers are benefitting. Through you, I would like to request the Hon. Minister and the Hon. Prime Minister that while so many schemes are being implemented for the Annadata, farmers should also be linked with MGNREGA.

SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE

(HATKANANGALE): Chairperson Sir, I request permission to deliver my speech in the Marathi language.

[English]

*Hon'ble Chairman Sir, kindly allow me to speak in Marathi farmers in Maharashtra are distressed and facing hardships due to flood and unseasonal rain. Out of 36 districts, 31 districts were flooded. Kolhapur and Sangli districts were the worst affected districts and my constituency Hatkanangle which falls in Sangli District was also badly affected. The farmers in this area were completely helpless and waiting for the government's help. It was totally inhuman and unnatural. Not only Maharashtra but the entire country has to face heavy rains. But there was human fault too. Almatti Dam in Karnataka and illegal constructions in riverbed area choked the rain water. The flood water level even reached at the level of 20 feet. The life in that area came to a standstill. Of course, it happened due to climate change but there are other reasons too that also need to be taken into consideration. A concrete policy should be framed in this regard. To counter water scarcity, river linking project should be implemented immediately.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

Earlier only farmers from Vidarbha region were committing suicide but nowadays the farmers in Western Maharashtra are also committing suicide. Hence, I would like to request you to declare a complete loan waiver package for the farmers at the national level. Thank you.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: I would like to request all the Hon. Members to please conclude their remarks within two minutes.

ADV. AJAY BHATT (NAINITAL-UDHAMSINGH NAGAR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on issues relating to farmers. I would like to make two or three brief points. Whatever initiatives have been undertaken by the Government led by Hon. Modi Ji for farmers are also reaching the State of Uttarakhand. Recently, we have received Rs. 1,500 crore for the promotion of organic farming. Our Government is making sustained efforts to accord the status of a fully organic State to Uttarakhand, on the lines of Sikkim.

Sir, there is a serious problem in hill States, namely that landholdings are highly fragmented. Monkeys and wild boars have caused extensive damage to fields and farmlands, compelling many people to abandon agriculture altogether. I would like to place this reality before the House, even though some may find it difficult to believe. When wild boars move in herds of 150 to 200, they dig up entire fields, destroying whatever crop has been sown, often within a single day. The situation with monkeys is equally grave. They enter homes, carry away belongings, and completely destroy crops standing in the fields. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a

uniform national policy to address this issue. I believe this problem exists in other States as well, but it is particularly acute in hilly regions, and effective solutions must be found. In the Terai regions, elephants cause severe damage by trampling crops. Just two days ago, an elephant dragged a man out of a vehicle and killed him on the spot. Elephants devastate fields and destroy sugarcane crops on a large scale. Therefore, the prevention of losses caused by wild animals must be incorporated into the national agricultural policy, so that farmers can be protected from such recurring and severe damage.

In conclusion, I would like to place one more submission before the House. In our State, instalments under the Pradhan Mantri Irrigation Scheme have been stalled at certain places. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister of Agriculture could kindly ensure that these funds are released at the earliest. Earlier, under the National Agriculture Development Programme, Uttarakhand used to receive Rs. 84 crore. In the current year, this allocation has been reduced to Rs. 21 crore. A smaller State like Tripura has been allotted Rs. 54 crore, while Uttarakhand has received only Rs. 21 crore. It is difficult to understand how such an imbalance has occurred. It appears that there may have been an inadvertent error at some stage. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of

Agriculture to this issue, and I am confident that he will examine the matter and take appropriate corrective action. Thank you.

DR. AMAR SINGH (FATEHGARH SAHIB): Sir, I would like to make only two points. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture is present in the House. One of the major reasons for crop losses is climate change, which may also be described as change in the environment. Our preparedness to deal with this challenge is neither sufficiently scientific nor robust. This is my observation, though the Hon. Minister and the Government would naturally have a better understanding of the matter. If rainfall is delayed by three months, how will seeds be sown, how will farmers carry out agricultural operations, and what will happen in the event of drought? These aspects require advance planning and preparedness, because climate change is a reality that we are already facing.

Secondly, in Punjab, and particularly in my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, the damage caused by stray animals is as extensive as the damage caused by floods. These animals are present right next to farmers' fields, and farmers are left helpless and distressed. Stray cattle move in large herds, enter the fields, and destroy entire crops before moving on. At present, there is no clear or effective policy to address this serious issue. We must protect farmers and shield them from the menace of stray animals. Sir, while there is a policy framework for wildlife, there is no dedicated agricultural policy to deal with crop losses caused by stray animals. When animals destroy a farmer's crop, there is no adequate

mechanism to compensate or protect him. This issue requires urgent and serious attention. In Punjab, there is widespread unrest because farmers are deeply troubled by this problem.

Chairperson Sir, through you, I would like to place one more submission before the Hon. Minister. At present, the compensation prescribed is Rs. 8,000 in cases of 100 percent crop loss and Rs. 4,000 in cases of 50 percent loss, with Rs. 4,000 contributed by the Union Government and Rs. 4,000 by the State Government. However, the actual losses suffered by farmers are substantially higher. Therefore, I would like to urge that the compensation amount be revised and enhanced to at least Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000, so that farmers may receive meaningful and adequate relief.

SHRI SAUMITRA KHAN (BISHNUPUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, today one of the greatest matters of pride for India is that the son of a farmer is the Prime Minister of the country. As a Member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, I feel proud to speak in this House on behalf of farmers.

19.41 hrs (Hon. Speaker *in the Chair*)

During the tenure of the Bharatiya Janata Party Government, schemes such as the Kisan Credit Card and the Kisan Samman Nidhi were introduced. Under the Kisan Samman Nidhi, Rs. 6,000 is provided by the Union Government to farmers. However, the Government of West Bengal is unwilling to extend this benefit to farmers in the State. My submission is that while the Bharatiya Janata Party Ministers are keen to ensure that farmers receive this benefit, the Trinamool Congress Government is not allowing its implementation in West Bengal.

Sir, the issue of river linking has also been raised today. In my area, the Dwarkeshwar and Damodar rivers flow. If these two rivers are linked, it would be immensely beneficial for farmers in the region.

At present, farmers should also be supported in adopting organic farming. If we extend proper assistance to farmers for

organic farming, it will prove beneficial not only for farmers but for society as a whole.

I feel pained that today the price of onions has reached Rs. 150 per kilogram. The Congress keeps saying that everything has collapsed and that onion prices are rising. I would like to state clearly that when the price of onions increases, it is the farmers who benefit. Similarly, the price of rice should rise from Rs. 28 to Rs. 48 per kilogram. Whenever we purchase a house or even a scrap vehicle, an item that earlier cost Rs. 6,000 today costs Rs. 8,000. Yet, when the prices of agricultural produce rise, Congress Members immediately raise objections, saying that the prices of potatoes or onions are increasing. I would like to emphasise that the prices of farmers' crops must also rise. My entire region is predominantly agrarian. When potato prices increase, there is an outcry that prices have gone up. Why should this be so? Today, the prices of all commodities are rising. The cost of goods manufactured in factories and automobile components has increased. However, when the prices of farmers' produce increase, it is portrayed as a problem. This double standard must be addressed.

The system of middlemen must be eliminated and payments should reach farmers directly. This issue deserves serious and thoughtful consideration. Farmers should have direct access to

consumers. If this is ensured, it will be beneficial for all stakeholders. Members of every political party claim that they stand with farmers, but the most distressing fact today is that even as farmers' issues are being discussed in this House, no Member from the Congress is present.

In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress Government is not permitting farmers to receive the Rs. 6,000 assistance under the Kisan Samman Nidhi. Moreover, farmers have even been subjected to police firing.

In my region there is a severe problem of elephants. I would like to state that elephants enter the fields and completely destroy standing crops. This menace must be addressed in areas such as Sonamukhi, Borchara, Bishnupur, Bankada and Joypur, because crops are being destroyed and farmers are left with no support or protection.

The most important issue is that farmers must receive the amount due to them under the Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme. The Union Government should convey this firmly to the Government of West Bengal.

Further, river linking should be undertaken in my region. If river linking is implemented, farmers will derive significant

benefits. I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this subject. Thank you very much.

SHRI UNMESH BHAIYYASAHEB PATIL (JALGAON):

Hon. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to speak in the Marathi language.

HON. SPEAKER: You may speak in Marathi. However, for this, a notice to speak in Marathi is required to be given one hour in advance.

SHRI UNMESH BHAIYYASAHEB PATIL: Sir, I had given the notice earlier.

HON. SPEAKER: All right. You may proceed.

[English]

***SHRI UNMESH BHAIYYASAHEB PATIL:** Hon. Speaker Sir, thank you very much I would like to speak in Marathi. First of all, I would like to congratulate hon. Prime Minister Narendra Ji Modi for depositing Rs.6000 per year in farmers accounts. In the post-Independence period, he is the first one to do this kind of benevolent thing. Hon'ble Speaker, he has framed a policy to provide seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. to the farmers. Everybody in this House is getting remuneration but it is for the first time the farmers are entitled for remuneration. Modi government is the only government which is providing Rs.3000 as pension to the farmers and I am

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi

proud of it. He has also started Kisan Channel for the farmers to update their technological knowledge. Right from providing coated-urea to the crop insurance scheme, this government is ready to cater all the needs of the farmers. I have two suggestions to make. Availability of water is necessary for the survival of farms and farmers. Padalse Project of my Jalgaon constituency should be brought under PMKSY to do justice to the farmers. We only keep on discussing how to stop suicides, but if we really want to stop this menace, MGNREGA scheme should be opened for farm labour. It would definitely help them to get rid of this traumatic condition. Central NDRF Team has visited our State of Maharashtra and the farmers are expecting the desired help. Necessary help should be given to the farmers as early as possible. Thank you

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA (SALEMPUR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak for the first time under Rule 193.

Sir, I speak from experience, as I was a Member of the Fourteenth Lok Sabha and have been elected once again to this House. On every occasion, lengthy discussions have taken place in the Lok Sabha on farmers' issues. What is important, however, is that such discussions are followed by concrete outcomes. In this regard, our Hon. Prime Minister has taken several decisive steps and policy initiatives in the interest of farmers, and I commend him for that. In particular, eastern Uttar Pradesh, which was once a major sugarcane producing region, especially the areas of Deoria and Kushinagar, had as many as thirteen sugar mills. Due to the short sighted decisions of previous Governments, those sugar mills were shut down, resulting in severe distress for our sugarcane farmers.

Sir, I would like to raise another important issue. Today, there is widespread concern across the country regarding the rising prices of onions, and this matter has also been discussed in this House. However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that when farmers in our country produce potatoes, onions and tomatoes in

abundance, buyers are often not available. Consequently, farmers do not receive remunerative prices for their produce and are forced to dump potatoes, onions and tomatoes on the roads. At that time, neither does the media raise its voice, nor does the House take up the issue. Therefore, through you, Sir, I would like to urge the Government, and I also appeal to this House, that whenever farmers fail to receive fair prices for crops such as potatoes, onions and tomatoes, the Government should ensure adequate storage facilities. This will enable our farmers to secure appropriate returns for their produce. With these words, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

SHRI RAMESH BIDHURI (SOUTH DELHI): Hon. Speaker Sir, Delhi is the capital of the country. A person living in Delhi, in this very manner.... *That is precisely why I have also come today, wearing a tie, to speak on behalf of farmers. ...*However, a lack of sensitivity is clearly visible. A Government has just been formed in Maharashtra, yet only two Members are present here, and they merely invoke the name of farmers and raise slogans in their name during the discussion.

Delhi is the capital of the country, and there are farmers living in nearly 360 villages here. In the past, after the acquisition of their lands, farmers were subjected to injustice. Those who later migrated to Delhi from outside and settled here were also, in one way or another, labourers or small farmers who came in search of employment. Many of them own one, two or three acres of land. The Government must be concerned about them as well, because they too are sons of farmers, irrespective of which State they came from or whether they are settled in colonies or within Delhi itself. Sir, I would like to draw attention to the sensitivity, or rather the lack of it, of the Delhi Government. Two of our Hon. Ministers are present here, one from Madhya Pradesh and the other from Bihar. A large number of people living in Delhi have migrated from these

*Not recorded.

very States. If the insensitive Government sitting in Delhi were to implement a scheme like Ayushman Bharat here, then the sons of farmers living in Delhi would also have access to healthcare facilities, just as in other States, with treatment cover up to Rs. 5 lakh. Sir, even today, about 20 percent of the farmers in Delhi, whose lands were acquired, continue to practise agriculture in the interior areas of the city. However, the Delhi Government does not provide them with electricity. Their connections have now been commercialised. Their tube wells have dried up, and the water table has fallen sharply. Farmers who wish to cultivate vegetables on one or two acres of land, and who still have one or two acres remaining with them, are not being granted permission for re boring. This Government does not allow them to re bore their tube wells, revive irrigation, grow vegetables, and sustain their livelihoods. These are the sons of farmers. They have not received formal education and therefore cannot obtain jobs in Delhi. They cannot even set up small roadside food stalls, as Delhi is a metropolitan city where all sections of society coexist. While a person may travel 500 kilometres away to work as a labourer, doing the same work within one's own social environment causes a sense of humiliation. This has therefore become a very serious and sensitive problem for the people of Delhi. Sir, through the intervention of our Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Section 81 has

been withdrawn in Delhi, under which agricultural land used to vest in the Gram Sabha. Land in unauthorised colonies has already been affected by this change. However, farmers who have built their homes amidst expanding residential areas are still facing cases under Section 81 even today, and legal proceedings continue against them.

Hon. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to request the Hon. Minister to issue clear guidelines and ensure that Section 81 is fully withdrawn. ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, kindly allow me just one minute. This is a very serious issue which directly affects village farmers residing in Delhi and therefore deserves urgent consideration. Sir, I will conclude with one final submission. I am thankful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on such a sensitive matter. In the 360 villages of Delhi, there are families whose lands were acquired by successive Governments. At that time, it was assured that such persons would be allotted alternative plots so that they could relocate, earn their livelihood, and sustain themselves in urban areas. While the Government acquired their lands, many poor and illiterate farmers were left out, and even today the Government has been reluctant to provide them with alternative plots. The Union Government must issue firm directions to the Delhi Government to ensure justice to these affected families, in the true spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. When one individual

receives an alternative plot and another equally deserving person is denied the same, it creates a deep sense of injustice and neglect. Therefore, the Government must make proper arrangements for the allotment of alternative plots and ensure that they are provided without discrimination. With these words, I conclude my remarks.

[English]

SHRI E.T. MOHAMMED BASHEER (PONNANI): Sir, we are discussing a very burning issue. Crop loss is really an issue to be discussed in detail. This discussion was really a very fruitful one in that sense.

As far as possible, we will have to make maximum efforts in addressing all the issues concerning farmers. What are the reasons for crop loss? We all know the reasons. It is because of many factors. Climate change is one of the most important factors. Due to climate change, a lot of things are happening. We have to give preference and priority for controlling the climatic conditions. Global warming, floods, droughts and other things are taking place. What we have to do is that we have to be very serious about that. We must make very earnest efforts for controlling and resolving these issues. India is a party to the Paris Agreement pertaining to global warming. In that also, we have to fix a target or to set a goal. That also should be taken very seriously.

Similarly, pest and disease control is an important issue. Unfortunately, we have not been able to register our success in that. We have not even achieved a small portion of the target in that. We have to give emphasis on pest control as well as disease control. Sir, the issue of man-animal conflict also needs serious attention.

Sir, I would like to talk about mechanisation in the agricultural sector. Unfortunately, we are not giving that much importance to mechanisation which is the most important area. We can improve the situation of the farmers through mechanisation. The awareness should also be created among peasants about mechanisation. Mechanisation increases production, efficiency, per man productivity and yield per unit land. It lowers the cost of work like ploughing by animal, lifting water, harvesting and transporting. Now, we are not getting agricultural labourers, they are migrating to cities because they do not find any employment in the agricultural sector. In order to keep them in the agricultural sector, we have to promote these kinds of activities. In addition to that, if we bring innovation in the farm technology, it will make farming more attractive. It will modify the social structure in the rural areas. The youngsters will be attracted to go to the fields and engage in farming. It will also lead to commercialisation because less input would give more output which will increase the income of the farmers. We all know that there is a shortage of labour and manpower. Mechanisation will result in better use of land. What I am suggesting is that we have to promote mechanisation in the agricultural sector.

Sir, I want to speak about the agricultural universities. We are proud of them because there is tremendous contribution made by

the agricultural universities, but unfortunately, agricultural universities are not up to the mark. I suggest that we have to revamp the curriculum of the agricultural universities and modernise them.

Sir, in my constituency of Ponnani, there is a big project, Thrissur-Ponnani Kole Land Development Project. The first phase of the project is over. Now, we are trying for the completion of the second phase of the project. The hon. Minister may kindly take steps in that regard. A proposal in that regard has already been submitted to the Government.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, today 51 Hon. Members have expressed their views on this matter.

The House stands adjourned till Friday, the 6th of December, 2019, at 11 a.m.

19.58 hrs

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday,
December 6, 2019/Agrahayana 15, 1941 (Saka)*

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