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Shravana 20, 1936 (Saka)

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(English Version)

Second Session
(Sixteenth Lok Sabha)



(Vol. IV contains Nos. 21 to 27)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, August 11, 2014 / Shravana 20, 1936 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR):

Madam, I have give notice for an Adjournment Motion. ...

(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, I will surely allow you after Question Hour, in 'Zero Hour'.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: Madam, this is a very

important issue. ... (Interruptions)It is a constitutional matter. ...

(Interruptions)

It is a violation of the Constitution. ... (Interruptions) It has never

been done in any State. ... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: I will allow you in after Question Hour. I know

that your point is important, but not as important as to take up the

Adjournment Motion.

... (*Interruptions*)

11. 02 hrs

At this stage, Shri Balka Suman and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.

HON. SPEAKER: I will allow you in 'Zero Hour'.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: I will not allow you now.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please do not do that.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Question Hour.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: You may raise it in 'Zero Hour', not now.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: I will allow you in 'Zero Hour'. Please do not do that.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats. No papers please.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: I know that, but I will allow you in 'Zero Hour', not now.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: I will allow you.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Now, Question Hour.

Q.. 461 – Shri Nishikant Dubey.

... (*Interruptions*)

11. 03 hrs

***ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

(Q. 461)

HON. SPEAKER : Now, Question Hour.

Q. 461-SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY .

[Translation]

SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the Hon. Minister has replied that a [English] Telecom Enforcement Resource and Monitoring Cell [Translation] has been constituted, which earlier used to be the [English] Vigilance Telecom Monitoring Cell. [Translation] ... (*Interruptions*) This question has three separate parts. ... (*Interruptions*) The first part is that there is a loss under Section 80(C), due to which there is a revenue loss of 80(C) in the rural areas where the common man uses telephones. ... (*Interruptions*) The second and most important part is that our country is struggling with both Naxalism and terrorism. ... (*Interruptions*) In this context, just as satellite phones are used, similarly through PSTN or [English] Voice-over-Internet Protocol

(VoIP), [Translation] there are three kinds of people involved in such activities. ... (*Interruptions*) The first are operators, because as per a Supreme Court judgement, a telecom operator here was engaged in fake and illegal international routing. In 2010, BSNL imposed a penalty on him, and a judgement was delivered against him. ... (*Interruptions*) The second are the Naxalites and terrorists who are using such equipment. The third are greedy people ... (*Interruptions*) who, in the name of making money, charge 45 paise, but when they use VSAT connections, they charge only 22 paise. I urge the Hon. Minister that there are three categories of such people. ... (*Interruptions*) As I had also mentioned about the national issue earlier, ... (*Interruptions*) one of the Ministers here had created an illegal exchange. ... (*Interruptions*) I submit that this is an issue linked with Naxalism and terrorism because if you are unable to intercept such communications, then does the Government intend to differentiate among these three categories of people? ... (*Interruptions*) Will you cancel the operator's licence, or will you register a case of sedition against such people? Despite forming the VTM in 2004, you have still not been able to stop this. What is your action plan in this regard? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the Hon. Member has raised a very serious question. ... (*Interruptions*) In our country, when calls come from abroad, there is a protocol between International Long Distance Operators and National Long Distance Operators. ... (*Interruptions*) By violating this protocol, such calls come through data instead of the voice protocol. ... (*Interruptions*) He has rightly said that our Department has taken action in this regard. ... (*Interruptions*) In the last three years, 14 such cases have been detected. ... (*Interruptions*) He has also made a specific point, since this issue has security implications as well. ... (*Interruptions*) He is absolutely correct, because call details are not maintained in such cases. ... (*Interruptions*) We take his suggestion with utmost seriousness. If any grave matter arises where an illegal operator is involved in an act of sedition or a security issue, we shall take strict and complete action against it. ... (*Interruptions*) We wish to assure him of this. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY: Hon. Madam, Speaker, I have also requested that the operator's licence be cancelled. ... (*Interruptions*) Due to the WLL technology, you are aware that the Supreme Court has issued an order stating that illegal rerouting has taken place, and

till now, the Government has not been able to take any action for sedition in this matter. ... (*Interruptions*)

My submission is that whether it is PSTN, WLL, VSAT or VoIP, all this is happening because the cost of international calls in our country is very high. ... (*Interruptions*) If you travel to Europe or America, you will find that calls to India are available at the rate of Re.1 per minute. Here, 45 paise is charged merely for connecting a telecom connection. ... (*Interruptions*) Does the Government have any intention that for tourists or for such illegal international calls, the rates of international calls may be reduced, just as during the tenure of Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji the local call rates were reduced, and considering the capability of the Hon. Prime Minister and Hon. Ravi Shankar Prasad Ji, is there any plan to lower international call rates? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Madam, Speaker, you are aware that as far as the rates are concerned, all such decisions are taken by TRAI. ... (*Interruptions*) However, to reduce this entire incentive, we have made the Government's revenue from licence fees a flat 8 percent. ... (*Interruptions*) As a result, I am pleased to inform that there has been a decline in such cases. ... (*Interruptions*) As regards considering something further for tourism, the Hon.

Member has given a very good suggestion, and I shall give it due consideration. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Hon. Madam, Speaker, from the replies received, it does not appear that the Government is very serious on this matter, because, as Shri Dube has expressed his concern ... (*Interruptions*) there seems to be no reflection of that concern in the Government's answers. ... (*Interruptions*) I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that the VTM Cells have now been renamed as TERM Cells. [English] In the year 2007, it was decided to have a continuous monitoring of compliance to prescribed norms regarding acquisition of subscriber for security-related concerns, and for this it was decided to verify the Customer Acquisition Form (CAF) of all the active subscribers on sample basis every month. ... (*Interruptions*) [Translation] I want to know that you conduct audits. Have you punished them after conducting the audit? ... (*Interruptions*) The biggest thing is that Ravi Shankar ji, you are also a big lawyer, if he engages someone with an agent, how will you keep a watch on these agents? ... (*Interruptions*) Whether you have a vendor staff tracking system or not, otherwise what is happening through these agents, you will not know, because, today there are three and a half crore fake sim card in the country. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Madam, Speaker, with regard to the point he has raised, I would like to inform him that in the last 15 years, more than 500 such incidents have occurred, and action has been taken in those cases. In the last three years, 14 FIRs have been registered, and due to this strictness, such incidents have considerably reduced. ... (*Interruptions*) We have a complete protocol with the operators. If, for instance, calls are increasing rapidly, we also monitor them to check whether there is any irregularity. ... (*Interruptions*) However, the point you have raised about how to audit the agents is indeed a good suggestion. I shall make further enquiries into this, and if any action is required, it shall certainly be taken. ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Madam, I am raising a very serious matter. ... (*Interruptions*) The Minister has already replied that the Telecom Enforcement Resource and Monitoring (TERM) cells are monitoring the illegal connections of telephone and entering at the international level. ... (*Interruptions*) In the period between 2004 and 2009, the former telecom Minister had 360 illegal telephone connections at his residence. These lines were also illegally connected to the Sun TV network. I want to know from the Minister

whether the Department has taken any action in this matter. The Minister said that the loss was to the tune of Rs. 4.5 crore, but BSNL has suffered more than Rs. 1,000 crore loss because of the former Telecom Minister. Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister what action the Department has taken and whether it is making any serious efforts to collect more than Rs. 1,000 crore from the former Minister. This is what I want to know from the hon. Minister.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Madam Speaker, hon. Thambidurai is a very senior Member. The purport of the question is about 'Illegal International Call Routing Racket'. However, since he has asked this question, I will reply to him. Yes, there have been reports that have come about in respect of a former Minister using BSNL system in a manner not permitted. I will get all the facts on board. As far as other issues are concerned, it is a matter of inquiry is too well-known. I will collect the information as to what action has been taken and I furnish the same to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJESH VERMA: Hon. Madam, Speaker, through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that due to the continuous receipt of unexpected SMS on mobile phones, the devices become

overloaded, and as a result, important SMS are not delivered on time. Will the Hon. Minister make any arrangement to stop such unexpected and meaningless SMS? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Madam, Speaker, there is a provision that if any consumer does not wish to receive unnecessary commercial SMS on his mobile phone, he can inform his service provider accordingly. TRAI has also framed rules for this. If there is any further need for action, I shall look into it. ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: I am again telling you that I will allow you to speak during 'Zero Hour', but not now. Please go back to your seats. I will allow you later, but now.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Q. 462 – Shri P. Nagarajan.

(Q. 462)

SHRI P. NAGARAJAN: Madam, with the blessings of our hon. Leader, Puratchi Thalaivi 'Amma', I would like to put my first supplementary.

"Amma Inna Summa Illa

Avar Illa Inna, Yarum Illa. "

(Amma is everything; there is no life without Amma, the Mother.)

Airlines and airports around the world compete to offer excellent customer service, investing huge sums in state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment, luxury lounges, self-service check-in facilities and countless high quality shops and restaurants to pamper the customer and differentiate themselves from their competitors. ...

(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Have you given notice to speak in Tamil? Otherwise, you should speak in English.

SHRI P. NAGARAJAN: I am speaking in English, Madam.

Of course, all such benefits amount to nothing in the mind of the passenger, if he or she is confronted at baggage collection with a broken suitcase and missing valuables. Naturally, any feelings of

satisfaction from a successful trip are quickly forgotten if your prized possessions are missing and your belongings are scattered.

Outsourcing has had negative influence on the quality of baggage handling. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) can never adequately replace the direct responsibility that airlines and airports used to have for baggage handling. Despite these SLAs', third-party baggage handlers compete primarily on monetary terms, and so must keep their costs as low as possible. They engage dozens of low paid temporary staff on hire.

I would like to know whether the Government has any proposal to make the airline concerned and the Airport Authority accountable for baggage handling, which earlier used to be their responsibility and not that of SLAs', and also whether there is any proposal to increase the liability level to Rs. 2000 per kilogram.

SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU: Madam, nobody will encourage the thefts. This Government is also not going to encourage the thefts. Theft is a crime and crime has to be dealt as a crime. Of course, we are taking steps to reduce these thefts in all airports of our country.

SHRI P. NAGARAJAN: Has the Government taken any stringent measure against private developers particularly in Delhi, Kolkata

and Hyderabad where such activities are very high? In case of prohibited items found after check-in baggage, what are the corrective actions which will be taken to safeguard the air passengers? If the private person is handling the baggage, they may open the baggage and put some illegal objects like bomb or some other articles. What will the corrective actions be taken to safeguard the passengers? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU: Madam, security is our prime concern and the Government is concerned with security and has taken numerous steps. In fact, on the security angle, India is one of the safest countries in the world and we intend to keep it so. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. UDHAYAKUMAR: Madam, firstly, I would like to thank the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Ammaji who is the source of wisdom and knowledge as well as the life giving, with whose blessings we live and also thank the people of my Dindigul constituency who have elected me to represent in the Parliament. We MPs of AIADMK and the tamil people in the world jointly thank the hon. Minister for External Affairs for having condemned the Sri Lanka's cruel act as well as for making Sri Lankan President Rajapakse and other officials concerned for

seeking pardon from our Chief Minister and the hon. Prime Minister.
... (*Interruptions*)

I would like to ask one question. There is a great delay in handling cargoes in some of the airports. Passengers have to wait for a long time. They are not bothered about the inconvenience caused to passengers. The security check and assistance in the conveyor belt are very poor. If this persists, what are the adequate steps taken by the Government to speed up the disposal of the cargoes on security assistance. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU: Madam, he has talked about cargo. Cargo is a different issue. We are trying to address dwell time.

SHRI HARIBHAI CHAUDHARY: Hon. Madam, Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that in my Parliamentary Constituency, Banaskantha, which is a border area, there is the Deesa Airport that has existed for forty years. Does the Government have any plan to make this Deesa Airport operational? At present, no service is available from this airport. Will the Hon. Minister take any steps to commence services from there?

[English]

SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU: Out of 125 airports available, 73 airports are operational. We will try to increase connectivity in the remaining airports. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: Madam, the hon. Minister has said that India's airports are safe from theft. Even the Ministry has issued certain guidelines regarding the prevention of thefts. First, frisking by ground handling staff is being done while leaving the airport. Second, use of cell phones in the airside by ground handling staff has been prohibited. I am surprised to know that even after these preventions, thefts are taking place. ... (*Interruptions*) Delhi is the capital of the country and there are so many theft cases registered every year. In the year 2011, there were 31 thefts in Delhi. In the year 2012, there were 24 thefts. In the year 2013, there were 14 theft cases. In the year 2014, that is up to May, 2014, there were 18 theft cases. Delhi is the capital of our country. We are seeing a number of theft cases every year. Even my better half was also frisked. I have made a complaint. I have written to the Home Minister and to the Secretary in 2012 but nothing is going on. If the Ministry has taken all these precautions, then why are the theft cases still going on? If the theft has to take place, what measures would he take?

SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU: Madam, what I said was that India's airports are secured. There is no dispute about that. We have thefts. The details of the thefts are given there. The steps taken are also given there. It is a crime. Crime will never be tolerated. Wherever the thefts occur, the State Governments do register the cases in the police stations and they do take action. We have taken steps to reduce crime and we continue to do it. We have not been able to eliminate crime in our country. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: This is not the answer. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet at 11.30 a. m.

11. 20 hrs

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Thirty Minutes past Eleven of the
Clock.*

11. 30 hrs

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Thirty Minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

(Hon. Speaker in the Chair)

11. 30 ¼ hrs

At this stage, Shrimati Kavitha Kalvakuntla and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR):

Madam Speaker, we want a statement from the Home Minister.

HON. SPEAKER: Jithenderji, I told you I will allow you in 'Zero Hour'. At that time if Home Minister is there, if he wants to, he can; but not now.

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: Madam, we want a statement.

HON. SPEAKER: I cannot force them. I told you that I was going to allow you during 'Zero Hour'. I will allow you. If at that time they give a reply, I have no objection. But not now please.

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: We want the Home Minister to just clarify this.

HON. SPEAKER: Home Minister is not here, he is in Rajya Sabha. What can I do?

[Translation]

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: Give a statement as soon as he arrives.

HON. SPEAKER: You may look into it after his arrival, if he responds. [English] Just now you please go to your seats.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Madam Speaker, the hon. Members made a point and the Chair has taken note of it. I suggest to them that they go back to their seats and allow the House to function. The problem is, Madam, the Home Minister is attending business in Rajya Sabha on a discussion about the Home Ministry and other issues. Once the Chair decides, the Government will definitely respond to it. They want to make a point, let them make it after the Question Hour. The

Government will take note of it and then we can decide what to do about it.

MADAM SPEAKER: At least now you go to your seats. He has said. Let the Home Minister come.

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: Madam, please give us an assurance that the Minister will clarify. That is what we want, Madam.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Madam, I do not want to make it more complicated, just to solve your problem and the house to function. [Translation] The problem is only one. The confusion has arisen because of the circular that has been issued. Let the Home Minister come and clarify the matter, and you may allow the Leader of the Floor to express his views so that this issue can be resolved.

HON. SPEAKER: How will he come now? He is currently in the Rajya Sabha.

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: After Question Hour they will raise the issue and then the Government should respond.

[Translation] If you have given your consent, then it is fine. ...

(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: That is what I am saying.

... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Jitendra Ji, I shall give you an opportunity to speak after the papers are laid on the table.

Question 463 - Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi

11. 33 hrs

At this stage, Shrimati Kavitha Kalvakuntla and some other hon.

Members went back to their seats.

(Q. 463)

[English]

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI: Madam, my question pertains to the Vision Statement of the All India Bar Council. What are the steps being taken by the Ministry to create a national database of all lawyers and legal practitioners and an associated tracking mechanism to ensure efficacy of welfare schemes being disbursed towards judicial personnel and the details thereof?

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Madam, if the hon. Member who is an experienced Member would see the question, the question basically pertained to two things: (1) modernization of infrastructure facilities in the court, and (2) Gram Nyayalayas. My entire answer is replete with details about these. He has asked a very specific question about welfare measures being maintained. I think he is quite aware, the Bar Council of India maintains the entire record of lawyers including measures thereto. If he has something specific to ask about them, I will collect the information from Bar Council and give it to him.

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI: My second supplementary pertain to Gram Nyayalayas. My question is, what is the total number of Gram Nyayalayas currently in existence vis-à-vis the

number of Gram Nyayalayas that were envisaged under the Eleventh Five-Year Plan.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Madam, the Gram Nyayalaya Act was enacted in 2008, which contemplated the creation of 5,000 Gram Nyayalayas. In the first instance, 182 Gram Nyayalayas were notified. As of now 159 Gram Nyayalayas are operational in six States. It was basically designed to ensure that the people in the rural areas had access to the judicial process and the court architecture of Judicial Magistrate Class I but regrettably the experience has been mixed. Some States have a different view that it is a kind of a parallel proceedings being maintained at the *taluka* level where proper courts are available. In 2013, a meeting of the hon. Chief Ministers of India and hon. Chief Justices of High Courts took place. It has been decided that discretion should be given to the States to look at it. This is how the matter stands.

SHRI NAGENDRA KUMAR PRADHAN: Madam, I want to put a question through to the Minister. It is a very good decision taken by the Government in 2008. My specific question is about establishment of Gram Nyayalayas in different States. The answer shows here that Odisha State has got Rs. 1,10,000 in the year 2011-12. Thereafter, in 2012-13 and 2013-14, there is no sanction for this

purpose. May I know from the Minister through you why no amount has been sanctioned to that State?

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Madam, as I indicated in reply to the previous questions, in the light of the decision taken at the level of the Chief Justices and Chief Ministers, discretion has been given to the State Governments and the High Courts concerned. Surely, if the Government of India receives any proposal from the State of Odisha about augmenting the number of Gram Nyayalayas and also augmenting resources, the Government will be keen to pursue that.

SHRI R. K. SINGH: I think this Question pertains to a subject which is of the gravest importance to our country.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, this question pertains to judicial reforms in our country. We must examine which issues need to be addressed in those reforms.

Madam Speaker, the justice system in our country has nearly collapsed; it has failed. Today, if someone commits murder, I know that a final judgment will not be delivered until the person dies. ...

(Interruptions)

[English]

Madam, the justice system has failed. ... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Please, don't make such comments. Ask your question.

[English]

SHRI R. K. SINGH: It is a matter of grave worry. That is why, because the judicial system has collapsed, we are having many law and order problems.

My simple question is this. Any judicial reform must address three things. First is increasing the number of courts. What has the Government done about it? Second is bringing about a sense of accountability in the judicial system, asking the Judicial Magistrates and District Magistrates how many cases they were supposed to dispose of and how many cases they have disposed of. I am sorry, from where I stand, on these two aspects not much is being done. My question to the Minister is whether the Government will think of addressing these aspects.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: The query of the hon. Member who has wide administrative experience merits consideration. We

need to debate judicial reforms. We need to reflect upon the need to augmenting our justice access system, but that is a larger debate; at an appropriate time, I shall revert to the House.

As regards the specific question, I would like to inform him that after becoming the Law Minister of India, I have written to all the Chief Justices of the High Courts to take adequate prompt steps to fill up 4,000 vacancies in the subordinate judiciary of India. I have written to the Chief Justices of various High Courts of India to ensure that the more than 250 vacancies of High Court Judges are filled at the earliest.

The Government of India is committed to ensuring all the support for the infrastructure development, for computerization, for data grid. All of us have to work as a team. I can tell you that there is a need to expedite the process of justice access system. In this all of us have to work collectively.

[Translation]

SHRI DUSHYANT CHAUTALA: Hon. Madam, Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Hon. Minister has replied that the Government has established Gram Nyayalayas in nine states across the country. Today, if we talk about our nation, there are 29 states. We can see one common thing in every state, that

the judiciary at the district level progresses at a very slow pace in handling cases. Will the Government, in the coming time, establish Gram Nyayalayas in all 29 States? In the State of Haryana, an amount of Rs. 25 crore has been provided by the Government during the past three years. Can we expect that, in the coming time, the Government will invest more funds in the State of Haryana for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas?

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Speaker Sir, as I have stated earlier, several states have their own structures under the law governing their Gram Panchayats. Under the law passed by Parliament in 2008, it was decided to establish Gram Nyayalayas primarily at the Taluka level, covering a number of Gram Panchayats together. However, it has been observed in practice that parallel institutions operate in several places. There are State Courts at the Taluka level, and when Gram Nyayalayas were introduced, certain States raised objections. In some States, such as yours, as well as in Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, Gram Panchayat Courts are already functioning. Those States have represented that, when Gram Panchayat Courts are already in existence, there is no need to establish separate Gram Nyayalayas. This is one of the issues, and to address it, the States have been

given the discretion to establish additional courts if they so desire, with the Union Government extending cooperation in the matter. As I mentioned earlier with regard to the northern region of Odisha, if the Government of Haryana requests the Union Government to extend assistance for establishing additional Gram Nyayalayas, we will consider such a request with utmost goodwill.

HON. SPEAKER: Question No. 464 Shri Kalyan Banerjee – Not Present.

Shri Devjibhai G. Fatepara.

(Q. 464)

SHRI DEVJIBHAI G. FATEPARA: Hon. Madam, Speaker, my mother tongue is Gujarati, therefore, I would like to speak in Gujarati. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: If you know Hindi, please speak in Hindi.

SHRI DEVJIBHAI G. FATEPARA: Hon. Madam, Speaker, through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that during the past three years, the salt workers in the country have suffered heavy losses due to rainfall, the maximum being in Gujarat. After these losses, how much assistance was provided by the previous Government to the salt workers during the last three years, and if no assistance was given, what were the reasons for it?

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the salt workers in our country indeed work under very difficult conditions. Gujarat is among those States where salt is produced in large quantities. The production there has been affected due to rainfall. The Hon. Member has referred to the issue of Central assistance in this regard. Though the subject of salt falls under the purview of the Centre, generally, the maintenance, promotion of this

sector, and welfare measures for the workers are undertaken by the State Governments. The Government of Gujarat has certainly been playing a leading role in this respect. At the Centre, we have the Office of the Salt Commissioner, which looks into all matters related to salt in great detail and extends assistance whenever necessary. However, no specific report has been received by the Centre so far regarding any loss caused due to rainfall and the requirement of assistance in this context. Therefore, the Union Government has not yet considered any such proposal. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: You will also get a chance.

[English]

SHRI DEVJIBHAI G. FATEPARA: *Hon'ble minister has given the reply. We are here since one and a half month only. We have come here for the first time and we thank Hon'ble Narendra Modiji for sending us here.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: You speak.

SHRI DEVJIBHAI G. FATEPARA: I will learn, it will take a little time.

* English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Gujarati

HON. SPEAKER: Please speak.

SHRI DEVAJIBHAI GOVINDBHAI FATEPARA: Hon. Speaker Sir, more than 70 percent of the salt in the country is produced in Gujarat. However, during the past ten years, no housing scheme has been formulated for the salt workers, nor has any arrangement been made for drinking water and ... *(Interruptions)* nothing has been done for the education of their children in these ten years. What steps is our Government going to take for their welfare? Kindly tell me about it. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: This work has to be done by the Centre.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Speaker, there are nearly 80 lakh salt workers in the country, and about one lakh of them are engaged in the production of iodised salt. All facilities for the workers engaged in the salt industry are looked after by the respective State Governments within their jurisdictions. ... *(Interruptions)* One moment, please allow me to complete my reply. Thereafter, if you wish to raise a supplementary question, I shall respond. The responsibility for providing treatment for occupational diseases, supplying necessary protective equipment for work in that area, as well as ensuring housing facilities, medical care, and access

to clean drinking water, lies with the State Governments. The Office of the Salt Commissioner also continuously assists the State Governments in this regard. In reference to the Hon. Member's mention of a housing scheme, I would like to inform that such a scheme had indeed been formulated earlier. Under that scheme, construction of 5,000 houses was proposed, out of which approximately 4,900 houses were completed. However, the assistance provided by the Centre faced certain objections and difficulties from the States. The cost of one house was Rs. 50,000, of which around Rs. 45,000 was to be provided by the Union Government, Rs. 5,000 by the State Government, and a small contribution by the beneficiary. When the scheme was reviewed again, the States expressed the view that the level of assistance needed to be enhanced. At that time, it could not be approved in the meeting of the Planning Commission, and hence, the scheme was discontinued. Certainly, those working in this sector must be provided with housing facilities. Under other schemes of the State Government, such as the Indira Awas Yojana, all such labourers are covered, and it will be ensured that they receive proper housing benefits.

DR. BHARTIBEN D. SHYAL: Hon. Madam, Speaker, first of all, I express my gratitude to you for giving me the opportunity to ask a question in this august House. According to the information I obtained from the official website of the Salt Commissioner, Jaipur, [English] the average annual product of salt in India is 215.18 lakh tonnes. [Translation] Out of this, the highest production of 240 lakh tonnes was recorded in the year 2009–10, and 221 lakh tonnes in 2012–13. Among the producing States, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan together account for 96 percent of the total salt production. Gujarat alone contributes 76.7 percent, Tamil Nadu 11.16 percent, and Rajasthan 9.86 percent. The remaining 2.28 percent of the production comes from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Karnataka, West Bengal, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, and Daman and Diu. Based on this information, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, through you, Madam, that since the maximum salt production takes place in Gujarat, why is the Office of the Salt Commissioner located in Jaipur? Is there any proposal to shift it to Gujarat, or to establish an office of the Salt Commissioner in my Parliamentary Constituency, Bhavnagar?

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Madam, Speaker, when the management of salt was considered, Rajasthan was also

one of the major salt-producing states. Hence, keeping in view the circumstances prevailing at that time, the decision to establish the Office of the Salt Commissioner there must have been taken. However, at present, there is no proposal under consideration in the Department to shift the location of this office.

(Q. 465)

SHRI ANANDRAO ADSUL: Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity. As the Indian economy grows, a large number of skilled persons will be required to sustain this growth. Current studies indicate that the net enrolment in the vocational courses in India is about 5.5 million per year compared to 90 million in China and 11.3 million in the United States. A mere 2 per cent of Indian workers are formally skilled. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what concrete steps are being taken by the Government to increase the number of skilled workers in the country.

[Translation]

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the concern expressed by the Hon. Member is indeed justified. In the coming times, our country faces a great need for skill development. The Government has deliberated upon this matter on several occasions at different times. Even after the formation of the new Government, all of you must have witnessed the Hon. Prime Minister's vision in this regard. Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has emphasised that a new Department for Skill Development

will be established, and in the coming days, we shall fulfil the vision of Skill India. This is the need of the hour. It is essential for providing employment opportunities to the youth, and the Government is taking all necessary measures towards this objective. From the perspective of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, we are discharging our responsibilities in this direction. In addition, there are sixteen other Departments working towards the same goal, and I am confident that in the times to come, we shall surely achieve success in this endeavour.

[English]

SHRI ANANDRAO ADSUL: Madam Speaker, it is our experience that in so many sectors, particularly in the manufacturing sector, the quality of our products globally is lagging much behind and because of that we see so many Chinese products, right from Diwali's *Panktiwara* festival to *Sankranti's patang* festival, are being sold in our markets. This is because our products are not competitive in respect of smaller things as well. We have to improve upon our small scale industries in such a manner that the products will be competitive globally. My question is whether or not the hon. Minister will look into such things seriously. Though they are small things, they are very much essential to the people.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: For that the entire Ministry has been formed.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

PROF. SAUGATA ROY (DUM DUM): Madam, we should have a development programme for the Minister!. ... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Saugata Roy ji, don't speak in between.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Madam, Speaker, as I have stated earlier, there is an immense need for skill development. The Government is equally concerned about enhancing the quality of our products. You may recall that the previous Government had formulated a Skill Development Policy and established its institutional framework. Under that framework, various components were created such as the Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development, the National Skill Development Coordination Board, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and the National Council for Vocational Training. Each of these entities had

its own specific mandate. Some were tasked with ensuring quality, while others were responsible for expanding training outreach at the grassroots level. Subsequently, it was decided to merge some of these components to form the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The idea behind establishing this company was to promote collaboration between the private sector and other stakeholders. The company expanded its operations significantly and collaborated with numerous institutions. It also received considerable support. The Government of India held a 49 percent stake in it, while the remaining 51 percent was contributed by private partners. By engaging with leading entrepreneurs, the corporation made commendable progress. In this context, the Government also provided financial assistance to several institutions at concessional rates, which led to an improvement in quality. To enhance the capacity and standards of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), the Union Government extended financial assistance ranging from Rs.1 crore to Rs.3.5 crore at various levels. This has also contributed to quality enhancement. Furthermore, the Government has undertaken efforts to improve the quality of instructors. The syllabus in ITIs is being revised. Obsolete courses have been removed, and those relevant to the present context have been

incorporated. Training and infrastructure are being aligned with contemporary needs so that our people can enhance their skills, produce high-quality goods, and enable the country to compete effectively in the global market.

SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV: Hon. Madam, Speaker, as far as skill development is concerned, I believe that after the agriculture sector, it is through various kinds of skills that our youth can find employment, whether in the private sector or the public sector. During the previous NDA Government, the UPA Government, and even the present NDA Government, long promises were made regarding employment generation. However, those promises have not yet been fulfilled. ... (*Interruptions*) I am referring to both ... (*Interruptions*) the NDA, the UPA, and again the NDA. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please ask your question.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV: Shri Anurag Ji, please learn to listen. ... (*Interruptions*) Even during Atal Ji's Government, you had promised to provide employment, but you could not fulfil that promise. ... (*Interruptions*) This concerns the employment of the youth of our country, so please listen. ... (*Interruptions*) In the

Twelfth Five Year Plan, from the year 2012 to 2017, a promise was made to provide employment to five crore young people. However, during 2012–13, only 48 lakh were trained, and in 2013–14, only 75 lakh people were trained, whereas the target was to train one crore youth every year.

12.00 hrs.

Madam, I was listening to the Hon. Minister's reply. The Hon. Minister was responding as though he were making requests, saying that this too should be done, and that too should be done. What I would like to say is, Hon. Minister, it is you who have to do it yourself. Kindly tell us whether you are actually doing it or not. Will you fulfil the promises made in the Five Year Plans or not? You seem to be requesting, whereas the people of the country have already given you the power to act. Therefore, please act upon it and inform us by when you will fulfil it.

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the Hon. Member has asked his question with great enthusiasm and energy. I would like to remind him that for the past ten years, it was the UPA Government in power, and that Government functioned with their very support. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV: I have addressed both sides. ...
(*Interruptions*) I have said it to them as well as to you. ...
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: At that time, you did not raise this question. Whenever the Union Government formulates a policy, its executive agencies are the State Governments. You are part of the State Government in Uttar Pradesh today. Under the Union Government's schemes, in terms of implementation of skill development, Uttar Pradesh ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please listen to the reply. This is not the way.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: They should ensure that its implementation in Uttar Pradesh is carried out properly. ...
(*Interruptions*) I can say with a sense of pride that it has been only seventy-five days since the new Government assumed office. Shri Modi has announced the Skill India initiative, and for that purpose, a new Department has been created. Through a letter dated 1st August, an amendment to the Rules and Regulations, 1971 was notified on 31st July, 2014, and its functions have been clearly defined. These functions will now be executed in a structured manner, and from the

perspective of skill development, we shall emerge as the largest and most capable nation in the world.

***WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

Starred Question Nos. 466 to 480

Unstarred Question Nos. 4509 to 4649

12. 02 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Now Papers to be laid.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): Madam, on behalf of Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad , I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) :-

(1) Detailed Demands for Grants of the Department of Electronics and Information Technology for the year 2014-2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 675/16/14)

(2) Outcome Budget of the Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, for the year 2014-2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 676/16/14)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) :--

(1) Memorandum of Understanding between the GAIL (India) Limited and the GAIL Gas Limited for the year 2014-2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 677/16/14)

(2) Memorandum of Understanding between the GAIL (India) Limited and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2014 2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 678/16/14)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI G. M. SIDDESHWARA): I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the year 2014-2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 679/16/14)

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

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Air India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2012-2013.

(ii) Annual Report of the Air India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2012-2013, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

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

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 680/16/14)

(4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Aero Club of India, New Delhi, for the year 2012-2013, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Aero Club of India, New Delhi, for the year 2012-2013.

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

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 681/16/14)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI PON RADHAKRISHNAN): I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Triveni Structurals Limited, Allahabad, for the year 2011-2012 , alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon under sub-section (1) of Section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 682/16/14)

[Translation]

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES,
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI VISHNU DEV SAI): Hon. Madam, Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Financial Estimates and Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2014-2015.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 683/16/14)

12. 03 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 38th, 39th, 40th, 51st and 52nd Reports of the Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on ‘Review of Export of Iron ore Policy, ‘Promotion of Steel usage’, ‘Functioning of MSTC Limited, ‘Service conditions of workers in Public Sector Steel companies’, and ‘Marketing and Transportation of Steel by Public Sector Steel Companies’ respectively, pertaining to Ministry of Steel. *

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES,
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR
AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI VISHNU DEV SAI):** Hon. Madam,
Speaker, I beg to lay the following statements: -

- (1) the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 38th Report of the Standing Committee on

* Laid on the Table

Coal and Steel on `Review of Export of Iron Ore policy',
pertaining to the Ministry of Steel;

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 684/16/14)

- (2) the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 39th Report of the Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on `Promotion of Steel usage', pertaining to the Ministry of Steel;

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 685/16/14)

- (3) the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 40th Report of the Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on `Functioning of MSTC Limited', pertaining to the Ministry of Steel;

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 686/16/14)

- (4) the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 51st Report of the Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on `Service conditions of workers in Public Sector Steel Companies', pertaining to the Ministry of Steel;
and

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 687/16/14)

(5) the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 52nd Report of the Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on 'Marketing and Transportation of Steel by Public Sector Steel Companies', pertaining to the Ministry of Steel.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 688/16/14)

HON. SPEAKER: Calling attention by Shrimati Kavitha Kalvakuntla.

SHRI A.P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR): Hon. Speaker, please give us the chance to speak first. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: First there will be a Calling Attention, then I will give you a chance to speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: This is not right. Your own Members are requesting repeatedly.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: After Calling Attention, when 'Zero Hour' starts, you will be the first Member to speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Please listen to me first. I am saying that I will give you a chance to speak. You please sit down.

... (*Interruptions*)

12. 04 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

Decision to Discontinue Kousar Nag Yatra in South Kashmir which will impede the plans to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits

[English]

SHRIMATI KAVITHA KALVAKUNTLA (NIZAMABAD):

Hon. Speaker, I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

“The decision to discontinue Kousar Nag Yatra in South Kashmir which will impede the plans to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits.”

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 689/16/14)

Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. The notice for the Calling Attention that I had given to the hon. Home Minister was not particularly regarding the Kousar Nag Yatra, but it was related to the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits. So, the focus of the notice

was not on this Yatra. Of course, this Yatra is very important one, but the Yatra was not a traditional one. ... (*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): Madam Speaker, a Statement is laid on the Table of the House. ... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: It has been laid, its copies are reaching you.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Okay, they'll read it. [English]

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Madam Speaker, a concern has been raised from different quarters about adverse impact of discontinuing the Kausar Nag Yatra on the plan for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits.

At the outset, the Government of India would like to reiterate its stand that it is committed to rehabilitate and facilitate the return of Kashmiri Pandits who migrated to Jammu and different parts of the country in the early 1990s back to the Kashmir Valley. In this context, the Government will further like to clarify that there is no linkage between the participation of Kashmiri Pandits in Kausar Nag Yatra with their rehabilitation.

Madam Speaker, Kausar Nag is a lake, located at a high altitude of about 12,000 feet in the Pir Panjal range in the Kulgam District, in the Southern part of Kashmir Valley. It is believed among the Hindus of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, that the stream of the lake has emanated from the feet of Lord Vishnu and its water contains medicinal value. Traditionally, prior to 1989, before the onset of militancy, the devotees used to visit this place in an unorganized manner for performing their Puja on the day of Nag Panchmi in the Shravan month of Hindu calendar. They would take the route from Reasi *via* Gul Gulab Garh on foot. It was not a traditional Yatra but an event to perform only Puja. The Puja, however, got disrupted with the eruption of militancy. The Puja at Kausar Nag was, however, resumed by the devotees a few years back following improvement in the overall security scenario through its traditional route, i. e. Gul Gulab Garh *via* Reasi with its base camp at Village Chassana, Tehsil Chassana in the District Reasi of Jammu region.

The State Administration has been making the security arrangements for the pilgrims coming from the Reasi side of the Jammu region to Kausar Nag in Kulgam District. This year also, a batch of 150 devotees who came from the traditional Reasi route

performed their Puja at Kausar Nag on 1st August, 2014 and returned on the same date. The controversy, however, erupted this year over the six day long event (28th July – 02nd August) between the Valley side separatists against the Kashmiri Pandit organizations.

Madam, while the pilgrimage was on from the traditional route *via* the Reasi side, Shri Vinod Pandita, Chairman, All-Party Migrant Coordination Committee leading another group, made a request to the DC, Kulgam for performing the Yatra *via* the non-traditional route from the Valley side. The Army and other Government officials were instructed by the DC, Kulgam to facilitate a parallel Yatra from the Valley side of Kulgam district. Meanwhile, on the appeal of the Separatists, about 200 locals of Kulgam tried to march towards Kausar Nag on July 31, for building a mosque at Kangwatu, near Kausar Nag. This attempt was, however, thwarted by the security forces. In view of the tension building up between the groups trying to reach Kausar Nag from the Valley side and the locals under the banner of “Save Kausar Nag Front”, Shri Vinod Pandita and his group was disallowed to undertake the parallel Yatra from the Valley side of Kulgam. He was advised to join the group which had gone from the Reasi side of the Jammu region. This offer, however, was turned down by Shri Vinod Pandita.

The above said event, however, has led to a major controversy between the Jammu based groups and Kashmiri Migrant Committee on the one side which gave hype to a low key event of a group of pilgrims performed Puja on the day of Nag Panchami and on the other side, the Valley-based separatists, and the mainstream political parties which called the event, a well-planned conspiracy and project the event as having an adverse environmental impact on the Kausar Nag area. A few prominent leaders of the State expressed that the issue was neither communal nor ecological but politically motivated in order to create a 2008 agitations-like situation where one community was pitted against another and made the issue as Jammu region Vs. Kashmir.

As per the report, the main body of Yatris who went from the traditional route, Jammu were facilitated by the State Government for undertaking the journey and they performed Puja on the day of Nag Panchami. The other small group of Yatris who wanted to reach the lake *via* the non-traditional route from the Valley side of Kulgam were denied permission by the District Administration on account of law and order considerations. The issue, for the time being, has subsided.

As far as the Government's plan for the return and rehabilitation of the Kashmir migrants to the Kashmir Valley is concerned, it will not be affected by the recent incident of 'Kausar Nag'. The Government has announced various packages, from time to time for the Kashmir migrants. At present, the Prime Minister's Package amount of Rs. 1,618. 40 crore announced in 2008 is being implemented. The Package provides for financial assistance for purchase or construction or repair of houses in the Valley, construction of transit accommodations in the Valley, scholarship to the students, Government jobs to the migrant youth, assistance for self-employment, assistance for agriculture and horticulture, waive of interest on unpaid loan, etc.

The review of the rehabilitation plans and packages announced for the return of Kashmiri migrants is a continuous process. A revised proposal with financial implication of Rs. 5,820 crore has since been received from the State Government. The proposal envisages upward revision of the scale of most of the items of the existing PM package of 2008.

Our Government in the Union Budget 2014-15 present on 10th July, 2014 in Lok Sabha has earmarked Rs. 500 crore for the rehabilitation and return of Kashmiri migrants. ... (*Interruptions*) In

view of the past experience, it has been felt that the new package for return and rehabilitation of the Kashmir migrants should be carefully finalised in consultation with the State Government and representatives of the migrants. Our Government has already started the process for drawing the contours of the scheme. ...

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Firstly, you do not raise the matter under the proper Rule, and then you interrupt in between. Now, only the Member who has raised the issue under the Rule will speak.

[English] This is not fair.

... *(Interruption)*

HON. SPEAKER: You are not supposed to say.

... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: No one will speak, only those whose names are there will speak. [English] What is this happening?

[Translation]

Kavitha Ji, please speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Only those Members whose names have come up in this Calling Attention motion will be given the opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRIMATI KAVITHA KALVAKUNTALA: Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. In the last few weeks we have seen in this Parliament that we have spoken about many national and international issues, particularly about the attack on Gaza and about the Palestine problem. As the largest democracy in the world, definitely speaking about these issues and standing with the innocent people is our duty. We speak about Gaza, we speak about Palestine, but we have conveniently forgotten our own clan, our own refugees in this country. So, I believe that all of us should seriously discuss about the issue of Kashmiri Pandits and since the BJP Government said that it is committed towards rehabilitating them back home, I believe all of us should, together, come out with a blueprint and give them confidence.

Madam, in 1990 militancy broke out in the Kashmir Valley and it has forced its Hindu minority into exile. About three and a half lakh Kashmiri Pandits were forced out of a land where their

ancestors had lived for thousands of years. The administration collapsed and the terrorists went on a killing frenzy, putting to death at least 700 innocent people, some of them in extremely brutal fashion. [Translation] The women were mutilated while still alive and thrown away. The children were massacred in a horrific manner. [English] In just a matter of few months, Kashmiri Pandits became refugees in their own country.

Madam, in 1947, when the entire country was suffering with the aftermath of partition, Mahatma Gandhiji had said that it is only Kashmir that i look upto, it is only there I see a ray of hope. But in 1990 when this massacre started, that ray of hope faded completely. The Pakistan-instigated ethnic cleansing had begun on that day and unfortunately consecutive Indian Governments could not read into it because what happened in 1990 had continued and it was not a one time thing. after 1990, it was repeated again. in 1991 there were attacks on Kashmiri Pandits, in 1997 there were attacks on them, in 1998 and also in 2003. It has been 25 years since these Kashmiri Pandits have been driven out of their homeland. My sincere request to the Government is that they should give them a sense of justice. [Translation] We have been giving money. We built tents for them, they were very good. [English] Hundreds of people died of snake

bite, hundreds of people died out of sun stroke and hundreds of people died out of depression. that was the condition that we put them in. their tents never had good facilities.

But apart from the money factor, they should get a sense of justice. About 700 Kashmiri Pandits were killed and the official records say that only 219 were killed. FIRs are very few, none of the FIRs has been ever followed up and nobody is arrested. If there is not a single conviction in these 700 killings and now we are asking them to go back and say that the Government is committed to send them back, how do we ensure their safety? More than the safety, how do we assure them of coexistence there? Is there a conducive atmosphere where we want them to go back? How do we take care of that situation? This is the important issue that we all need to deliberate upon and arrive at a blueprint.

We see many NGOs, many international think tanks, many groups, like UN Groups intervening on small issues. But it is a shock that nobody came to their aid. Even the media had ignored them very largely. In these 25 years, irrespective of their faith, [Translation] be it Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists [English] there were killings in thousands and they have suffered a lot due to endless cycle of violence. This should come to an end. We should put an end to this

and this should begin by rehabilitating the Kashmiri Pandits as a first step.

Madam, I would like to draw the attention of all the hon. Members of this House to the fact that, as I mentioned, about 700 Kashmiri Pandits were killed and no conviction has happened. I would particularly want to point out to two cases here. In 1990, a terrorist called Farooq Ahmed Dhar *alias* Bitta Karate – with your permission I am taking the name – had accepted on record, in public forum and on television that he had killed about 20 people. The first person he had ever killed was a person called Satish Kumar and the young man was killed in February, 1990. His case has been registered in Srinagar under FIR No. 22/90. But Farooq Ahmad Dar spent a few years in jail and was released on bail. While releasing him on bail, the designated TADA Judge, Mr. N. D. Wani had remarked; and I would like to quote the Judge's words:

"The Court is aware of the fact that the allegations levelled against the accused are of serious nature and carry a punishment of death sentence or life imprisonment. But the fact is that the prosecution has shown total disinterest in arguing the case which is in complete violation of Article 21 of the Constitution."

Madam, I would just like to ask the Central Government here, if the State Government had not shown any interest, what was the Central Government doing? What was the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Central Government doing? [Translation] When Kashmiri Pandits seek some information under RTI, the Central Home Ministry said, they have no information about this particular terrorist. How can you not have information about a terrorist like this who goes on record and says that he has killed so many people?

Other than that, i would like to highlight another case. the idea of highlighting these cases is to regain some faith in the Kashmiri Pandits. I have interacted with many of them personally. When they want to go back, they only ask one question: [Translation] How to go, how will we face them, our murderers are roaming there openly. What will we do in our village? [English] This is what they have asked.

To put them to justice, to bring justice and give them a sense of justice, i would like to highlight another case. this particular case is regarding the four unarmed personnel of Indian air force who were killed while they were waiting for a bus in Srinagar on January 25, 1990. This case is not under the state Government. this case is

directly under the CBI. but since 25 years, no charges have been framed in this case. those who were killed that January morning, included a squadron leader Ravi Khanna and his three colleagues, one Corporal D. B. Singh, one Corporal Uday Shankar and an Airman, Azad Ahmad. [Translation] Madam, just as terrorism has no religion, those who were killed belonged to all faiths, Hindus, Muslims alike. This is not a communal issue, it is an issue of ensuring justice. [English] We have to punish the culprits, whoever they are, whichever religion they belong to.

Madam, I just want to ask the Indian Government one thing. [Translation] If even after 25 years there has been no progress in the case relating to the killing of the Air Force officers, what are their families to do? Where should they go, and whom should they approach? [English] Particularly, does the Indian State care for its men in uniform? Why should they perform the duty? How do you motivate the younger generations to come and join the Army? I believe, we have to seriously consider this issue and move forward and make progress in this case. [Translation] When the massacre occurred in 2003, Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was in Government and he had said, [English] we will rehabilitate the Pandits. Now, after 10 years, again there is a BJP-led Government at the centre.

judging from its recent statements and its election manifesto, it seems that the Government is serious about making possible the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland.

[Translation]

Madam, I just want to conclude by asking this question, [English] does the Government have any blueprint for their return? If yes, what plans does it have to ensure their safety and to give them protection? It is because, right now, it seems that the Government is trying to push them back to their homeland just to show some result saying, [Translation] on the Kashmir issue, we have moved forward. [English] I sincerely urge upon the Government that until and unless you cannot guarantee their safety, do not put them in danger. Kindly do not put them in danger.

I would also say one more thing. Kashmir is definitely an integral part of India; there is no doubt about it. When we say that, we have to give a sense of justice to the Kashmiris. They have suffered enough. I sincerely request the BJP and the Government that let us not drag them into this *yatra* politics. Instead, let us think objectively. How will the Kashmiri Pandits return to the valley when their killers are roaming free? Kindly think about this particular issue.

My sincere request in the end is this. Please order for a retrial of the pending cases and please prepare a foolproof blueprint to send the Pandits back home. Kindly take the Pandits who are on the ground into confidence. Work along with them and involve the local people for a friendly co-existence.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (GANDHINAGAR): Hon. Speaker Sir, while Shrimati Kavitha Ji was speaking, I was listening to her with great attention. It reminded me that my colleague sitting beside me, who, as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, is now part of the Government. During the interim period when neither the UPA Government nor our Government was in office, at that time he had served as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee constituted under the Ministry of Home Affairs. I too had the privilege of being a Member of that Committee. I distinctly recall that this very issue, which Shrimati Kavitha Ji has elaborated upon in the House today, was discussed in detail by that Standing Committee for nearly two days. After an exhaustive discussion, all the assurances that had been given during the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji's Government were reiterated, particularly the solemn commitment that every person who had been displaced and was living as a migrant in our own country would be rehabilitated and enabled to return to their homes. In my considered view, rather than engaging in further debate or mutual argument on this subject, that report should be brought before this House, its recommendations duly followed up,

and the Hon. Home Minister should apprise the House of the action taken and the progress made in this regard.

I believe that every point raised today by Shrimati Kavitha Ji was valid. This is also confirmed by the report prepared by the Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs, of which I am a Member. Therefore, instead of engaging in further debate on the matter, I would urge the Government to focus on how to implement the recommendations of that report, and the Hon. Home Minister should take the necessary steps to ensure its implementation.

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR (HAMIRPUR): Hon. Madam, Speaker, for the past one week, a discussion on this important subject has been sought, and today you have kindly allotted time for it. We are grateful to you for this.

Hon. Madam, Speaker, Shrimati Kavitha Ji has very comprehensively presented the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. Those Kashmiri Pandits who were displaced twenty-five years ago, perhaps none of us sitting in this august House can truly comprehend their pain unless we speak to them personally. Thousands of them lived in tents in Delhi, forced to leave behind their beautiful homes. One generation has passed away, and perhaps now the second generation has begun to see a glimmer of hope with the advent of the Modi Government, which announced a scheme for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits and made a provision of Rs. 500 crore for the purpose. As Advani Ji rightly mentioned, what is needed now is to create the right atmosphere for their return. But where will that environment be created, if not in the very land to which they must return? For example, the Kausar Nag Yatra in the Pir Panjal range, at an altitude of about 12,000 feet, follows the traditional route from Sufian to Kongwattan and Kausar Nag. The Deputy Commissioner of Kulgam had granted permission for this Yatra. For twenty-six

days, there was no objection. Yet, just a day before it was to begin, separatist and Hurriyat leaders declared that the Yatra would not be allowed, claiming that the return of Kashmiri Pandits would change the region's demography and saying, this is Muslim land, how can Kashmiri Pandits return here? Such divisive remarks were made, and even posters were put up. The Deputy Commissioner, who had issued permission on the 2nd, withdrew it later. I would like to ask, are separatist leaders now to decide what happens in Kashmir? Are Hurriyat leaders to dictate what takes place there? The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, who is known to tweet on the smallest of matters, remained silent amid the crisis surrounding the Kausar Nag Yatra. ... (*Interruptions*) Why has the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir not expressed his view on this issue? After conveying greetings on Eid, why has he failed to speak up about this? ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please only ask questions.

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR: Madam, if this was the traditional route, then why was it closed? What truly pains me is when someone identifies himself as a Kashmiri Pandit but remains silent when the issue of Kashmiri Pandits is raised, unable to stop

even his own leader from ignoring their plight. ... (*Interruptions*) In view of the suffering of the Kashmiri Pandits ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Anurag Ji, please ask your clarification.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE (BARAMATI): Madam, he is not here to defend. ... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. SAUGATA ROY (DUM DUM): Madam, he is not here to defend. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Madam, I am on a point of order. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: What is your point of order? Under which Rule are you raising it?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: My point of order is under Rule 197 which is regarding the procedure to be followed under Calling Attention.

It says:

“(2) There shall be no debate on such statement at the time it is made but each Member in whose name the item stands

in the list of business may, with the permission of the Speaker, ask a clarificatory question and the Minister shall reply at the end to all such questions: ...”

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: I am saying the same thing, please ask your question.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: Shrimati Kavitha Ji has spoken, and we have listened to her because this is the first time she has spoken. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: The first speaker is allowed to speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: There is no question of doing politics over this issue. ... (*Interruptions*) As our senior leader, Shri Advani Ji, has stated, the report on this matter is still pending. When that report is brought before the House for discussion, you may deliberate on all these aspects. ... (*Interruptions*) Everyone will then have an opportunity to respond, but as per the point of order I have raised, please direct that he may seek clarification. And if a

discussion is to be held, then table the report and allow the discussion, everyone will participate. ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: You are right. I accept it. Only clarificatory questions can be asked.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Only those whose names are there will ask. Okay. [English] It is the same thing.

... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: He is not here to defend. Madam, how can you keep it on record? This is not right. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: He has not taken any name. You just do not know.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Anurag Ji, you are required to ask only a clarification.

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR: Madam, the regret is that in the past ten years, they themselves could not do anything. ...
(*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing like that. [Translation] Do you want the reply or do you only want to create disturbance?

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR: Madam, when the issue of Kashmiri Pandits is being raised here ... (*Interruptions*) if we are merely speaking about their pain, why create such commotion over it? ... (*Interruptions*)

Madam, my main question is this, ... (*Interruptions*) if the Yatra route from Sufian–Kongwattan to Kausar Nag was the traditional one, and the Deputy Commissioner had granted permission, then under whose pressure was that permission withdrawn? Madam, I have three or four clarifications to seek. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please ask your question.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR: Madam, why was the permission withdrawn? And if, under the Constitution of India, every individual has the right to practise his or her religion freely, does that right not extend to the Kashmiri Pandits as well? ... *(Interruptions)* Will the Government of Jammu and Kashmir not make appropriate arrangements to enable the Kashmiri Pandits to undertake the Kausar Nag Yatra? That is my first question. My second question is, when we talk about the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, and some separatist leaders there declare that their return would alter the demography of the region, does that not raise a serious question? When permission was withdrawn for a pilgrimage of merely forty people, how will the situation unfold when more than fifty thousand Kashmiri Pandits return to their homeland? ... *(Interruptions)* And I would like to reiterate this point once again. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Now you have said what you wanted to say. Please stop now. Shri Anurag Ji, your point has been made. You were to ask only one question, that's enough. Shri Sanjay Jaiswal Ji.

... *(Interruptions)*

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL (PASCHIM CHAMPARAN): Madam, please allow me to ask my question. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR: Well, I have already asked mine. Your Kashmiri Pandits sitting there could not even raise their question. ... (*Interruptions*)

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, I thank you very much. I am fully satisfied with the Hon. Home Minister's reply. When the Government of Jammu and Kashmir itself was ready to allow the Yatra to commence from within the State, my question is, if the Kashmiri Pandits do not proceed through the route in Kashmir, are they expected to take some other route? The Union Government had no objection, and the Yatra was proceeding peacefully. I fail to understand how any separatist can decide such matters.

Madam, I would like to conclude with just one point. Indonesia is an Islamic country, yet after India, it is there that Ramayana is staged on the grandest scale. When objections were raised there, it was said, "We may have changed our religion, but not our ancestors." Likewise, in India, every individual, irrespective of faith, has the right to visit places of worship through any route. I therefore request the Hon. Home Minister to inform this House what action the Union Government is taking in coordination with the State Government. When the State Government has already granted

permission, why are the Kashmiri Pandits not being allowed to travel by their traditional route to their sacred destination?

[English]

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, I would confine my queries clarificatory in nature.

My first query is on the statement, which the hon. Home Minister has made here. In the statement, there is a little bit of confusion. Firstly, in the statement, the hon. Home Minister has stated that 'it was not a traditional yatra. At the same time, he has also mentioned that there is a traditional route and there is an untraditional route. The traditional route is from the Jammu side and the untraditional route is from the Valley side.' If it is not a traditional yatra, how can you have a traditional route and an untraditional route? [Translation] If there were a Hindi version, it might offer a different interpretation. .

[English]

But I would come to the essence of the question because as Kavithaji just now mentioned, she was more concerned with the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri people in Kashmir Valley and she did not want this Kausar Nag Yatra to be inter-twined with this. But the

crux lies there because in this statement, the hon. Home Minister has made it very clear that a section of the Hurriyat, not the whole association, objected to the yatra from the Valley side; and they wanted to erect another worship place. That may lead to certain conflict. That was the reason why the DC withdrew it.

But here, I would like to read two statements. One statement is from the first Prime Minister of our country and another is from the second President of our country.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in 1961, and I quote:

"We talk about a secular state in India. It is perhaps not very easy even to find a good word in Hindi for 'secular'. Some people think it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct. What it means is that it is a state which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities. "

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then President of India when Nehru was Prime Minister, expressed a similar opinion, and I quote:

"When India is said to be a secular state, it does not mean that we as a people reject the reality of an unseen spirit or

the relevance of religions to life or that we exalt irreligion. It does not mean that secularism itself becomes a positive religion or that the State assumes divine prerogatives. Though faith in the supreme spirit is the basic principle of the Indian tradition, our State will not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion. "

The question lies here. I would like to understand from the Union Government. When Provincial Government fails to protect the secular fabric, when a section of fissiparous organization gives a call that 'we will not allow this yatra to function', what steps have been taken to protect the religious minority in the State of Jammu and Kashmir?

At the same time, I would also like to understand whether the Government is—competent is not the right word—strong enough to provide easement right to Hindus to visit Kausar Nag from the Valley side.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Hon. Madam, Speaker, all our esteemed Members have drawn attention to several important points. As far as

the issue of the Kausar Nag Yatra is concerned, there is no need to go into its details once again, as I have already made a statement on the matter. Our respected Member, Shri Bhartruhari Ji, sought certain clarifications regarding whether the Yatra followed a traditional route or not. I would like to clarify that earlier, when the Kashmiri Pandits used to go to Kausar Nag for the holy bath and worship, they travelled through the Kulgam route in the Kashmir Valley. However, ever since the migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, those who are now settled in Jammu have, since 2010, been undertaking the Yatra through the Reasi route. This year too, they had been granted permission for the same. However, due to certain unavoidable circumstances, the District Administration there cancelled the permission. Nonetheless, most of the devotees who wished to go to Kausar Nag were able to visit the site and perform all their religious rituals, including the holy bath and worship. Yes, it is true that after 1st August, certain separatist elements staged demonstrations and expressed their objection that the Yatra should not be undertaken through the Kulgam route. However, the local administration acted effectively and succeeded in preventing any untoward situation.

I would like to draw the attention of this august House to the issue of the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants, the Kashmiri Pandits. This is not a political issue for us, it is a national issue. What greater challenge can there be for us than to see that our own citizens, the people of our own country, are forced to live as refugees in their own homeland? This is not a question of Hindus, Muslims or Christians, it should not be viewed through the prism of caste, creed, or religion. It must be seen purely from the perspective of justice and humanity. This matter concerns the honour, dignity, and self-respect of our nation. It is not an issue of any particular community or faith. It is, for us, an emotional and moral question. Our young Member, Shrimati Kavitha Ji, has sought to know whether, with the allocation of Rs. 500 crore made by our Government in the Budget of 2014–15 for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, we shall indeed be able to ensure their resettlement. I would like to make it absolutely clear that whenever we make a commitment, we do so after due deliberation, with firm conviction and strong determination. I would like to say that whether one is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian or a Parsi, any citizen of India, no one in this country should be compelled to live as a refugee in their own land. In fact, this House should unanimously

pass a resolution on this matter. I appeal to the entire Parliament that we, as a collective body, should pass a resolution endorsing the steps taken by our Government for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits. The whole Parliament must declare its full commitment to this cause, that until every citizen of our country, who is today forced to live as a refugee on his own soil, in the womb of his own motherland, is restored to his rightful home and rehabilitated with dignity, we shall not rest. This should be the solemn resolve of every citizen of India.

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Now, 'Zero Hour' - Shri A. P. Jithender Reddy.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR (KARNAL): Hon. Madam, Speaker, all these discussions are meaningless. Until Article 370 is abolished and a Common Civil Code is implemented ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: No. I have taken up 'Zero Hour'.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri A. P. Jithender Reddy.

Nothing will go on record except what Shri Jithender Reddy speaks.

(*Interruptions*) ... (*Not recorded*)

HON. SPEAKER: I have called Shri Jithender Reddy and not you.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR: Hon. Home Minister Sir, please listen to me, whatever steps you intend to take, first abolish Article 370.

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record.

(*Interruptions*) ... *

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record except what Shri Jithender Reddy speaks.

(*Interruptions*) ... *

* Not recorded

12. 47 hrs.

SUBMISSION BY MEMBER

Re : A circular reportedly issued by the Ministry Home Affairs prescribing certain norms to be followed by State Government in relation to powers and functioning of the Governor under the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR):

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. [Translation] The Hon. Home Minister has just assured this House that justice will be done to every section of the people. With that same hope, I believe that you will also do justice to Telangana. Madam, on the 8th Friday, we went from here joyfully to Telangana to celebrate Raksha Bandhan with our sisters there. We were happy that we would celebrate the festival together. But the moment we arrived, a letter came hovering over our heads, this letter was from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Madam, the people of Telangana have struggled for sixty long years, through penance, agitation, and after losing many children, to achieve this State. And now, upon finally attaining Telangana, a new restriction has been imposed upon us. There are twenty-eight states in the country. Tell

me, which Chief Minister would accept that in his State, the Governor should have the power to transfer SHOs, ACPs, and DCPs, or that the Governor should take into his hands every file of the Council of Ministers and make decisions on his own? Earlier, in the month of July, a letter had been issued by the Home Ministry proposing to give certain powers to the Governors and seeking comments on it. We, all the MPs from Telangana, went to the chamber of the Hon. Home Minister with that letter. The Hon. Home Minister read that letter not once but twice, and after reading it, he said that “Jitendra, if this letter comes into effect, no Chief Minister will be able to discharge his duties. It will amount to Governor’s Rule. Rest assured, such a rule will not be implemented.” On the basis of the Hon. Home Minister’s assurance, we, in turn, assured the people of Telangana that there would be no Governor’s Rule. Our Chief Minister, Shri K. Chandrashekhara Reddy Ji, who dreamt of building Bangaru Telangana, a prosperous Telangana has been working tirelessly towards that goal. It has been only ten weeks since Telangana was formed, and during this short period, we have humbly requested everyone, including you, Madam, and Shri Arun Jaitley Ji, to give us financial flexibility, support, and assistance so that we can strengthen and nurture our new State. But, Madam,

every time we look, we find some or the other restraint being imposed upon us. You have seen what happened in the Polavaram issue, an Ordinance has been brought that will displace entire tribal populations, and, regrettably, that Ordinance has been issued under the signature of our Hon. Home Minister. ... (*Interruptions*) That Bill, too, has been passed by these very people. In the Rajya Sabha, the MSOs ... (*Interruptions*) and even the Ministers and Chief Minister of Telangana are being ridiculed on television. When we brought this to the attention of Shri Prakash Javadekar Ji, he said that they are cancelling the licences of those MSOs. Madam, through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Home Minister just one question. What exactly is the meaning and intent of this letter that you have issued?

Are you trying to take away the rights of all the Chief Ministers in India? ... (*Interruptions*) Do you intend to impose Governor's Rule in every region, in every Parliamentary Constituency? ... (*Interruptions*) This cannot go on in such a manner. ... (*Interruptions*) Madam, this is nothing short of dictatorship. ... (*Interruptions*) We request that the Hon. Home Minister examine this letter and give a reply to the House. ... (*Interruptions*) Our Chief Minister, Shri K. Chandrashekhar Rao Ji, has written a letter to Shri

Narendra Modi Ji, as he knows that perhaps the Prime Minister may not be aware of this letter. When the Union Government once tried to interfere in Gujarat, Shri Modi Ji himself had opposed it. ...
(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Your point has been made.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY: We want a reply from the Hon. Home Minister regarding this letter. ... *(Interruptions)* and it should be withdrawn. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

... *(Interruptions)*

DR. UDIT RAJ (NORTH WEST DELHI): You had also shown the dream that the first Chief Minister would be a Dalit. ...
(Interruptions) What happened to that promise? ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Please, no one should speak out of turn.

... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

... (*Interruptions*) *

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: What is happening?

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: No, I have not allowed you to speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): Hon. Madam, Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on this matter. Only if your permission is granted, otherwise, I would only like to say briefly that as far as the relations between the Centre and the States are concerned, our Government fully understands the sensitivity of this issue. It will be our earnest endeavour to ensure that no strain of any kind arises in Centre–State relations.

Madam, our Government is also firmly committed to ensuring that the rights and powers of the States remain fully protected, and

* Not recorded

under no circumstances should any question mark be raised over them. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR): It was the UPA Government which had made that rule. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: You keep interrupting on every point.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: What has happened to you today?

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR (HAMIRPUR): Madam, he is only pointing out the mistake committed by the UPA, about what they themselves had done.... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: All right, you too please sit down.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Hon. Madam, Speaker, the Hon. Member sitting on the front bench has rightly stated that this was done by the UPA Government. It is indeed true that the Andhra

Pradesh Reorganisation Bill was prepared by the UPA itself. ...
(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: What is going on here?

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(*Interruptions*) ... *

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: This is not the way. This is no manner in which to conduct proceedings.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Madam, I would like to place on record that under Section 8 of the same Act, there is a provision stating that [English] Responsibility of the Governor to protect residents of the common capital of Hyderabad. ... (*Interruptions*) Section 8. (1) states that : “On and from the appointed day, for the purposes of administration of the common capital area, the Governor shall have special responsibility for the security of life, liberty and property of all those who reside in such area. ” ... (*Interruptions*)

* Not recorded

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI (HYDERABAD): Madam, it is unconstitutional. ... (*Interruptions*) It should not be allowed. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions) ...**

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, please continue with your statement.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Only the hon. Minister's statement will go on record.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Madam, Section 8. (2) states that : "In particular, the responsibility of the Governor shall extend to matters ..." ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Please go back to your seat. [Translation] Do not interrupt while Hon. Minister is speaking. This is not the way.

* Not recorded.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: This is not the way. Do you not want to hear the reply of the hon. Home Minister?

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Do you not want to hear the Hon. Minister's reply? Shri Jitender Ji, do you not want to hear the Minister's reply? If you do, please take your seat. You will have to listen to the entire reply, this is not the way to proceed.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, please proceed with your statement. [English] Let it go on record.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Madam Speaker, Part (2) of the same Section 8 states:

[English]

“Section 8 (2): In particular, the responsibility of the Governor shall extend to matters such as law and order, internal security and security of vital installations, and management and allocation of Government buildings in the common capital area.”

[Translation]

This is Part 3 of the same Section:

[English]

“Section 8 (3): In discharge of the functions, the Governor shall... (*Interruptions*)

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): That is the crux of the matter. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: I am coming to that point. [Translation]

This is Part 3 of the same section:

[English]

“Section 8 (3): In discharge of the functions, the Governor shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers of the State

of Telangana, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken.”

[Translation]

It is under this very provision that an advisory has been issued there. Nothing beyond that has been done. There has been no violation whatsoever of any of the provisions contained in our Act. ...

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): We would like to know whether the State Government was consulted or not? ...

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. First, listen to the whole thing properly.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Next is:

[English]

“Provided that if any question arises whether any matter is or is not a matter as respects which the Governor is under

this sub-section required to act in the exercise of his individual judgment, the decision of the Governor in his discretion shall be final, and the validity of anything done by the Governor shall not be called in question on the ground that he ought or ought not to have acted in the exercise of his individual judgment.”

[Translation]

The provision of this Act is absolutely clear. Nothing has been stated in the advisory that goes beyond what is contained in it. I would like to make it categorically clear that there has been no violation anywhere of the provisions of this Act, nor has anything been issued that contravenes them. There is also a further provision which states:

[English]

“Section 8 (4): The Governor shall be assisted by two advisors to be appointed by the Central Government.”

[Translation]

Two advisor appointments have already been made by the Union Government. ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR):

Madam, this is wrong. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR (KARIMNAGAR): Madam, I want to seek one clarification. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at two o'clock.

12. 58 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Fourteen of the Clock.

14.02 hrs

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Two Minutes past
Fourteen of the Clock.*

(Dr. Ratna De (Nag) *in the Chair*)

GOVERNMENT BILLS-Introduced

(i) The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders(Amendment) Bill, 2014*

[Translation]

**THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT):**

Hon. Chairperson, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constituion (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON [DR. RATNA DE (NAG)]: The question is:

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 11. 08. 2014

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constituion (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978.”

The motion was adopted.

[Translation]

SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Madam, I move that the bill be introduced.

14. 03 hrs.**(ii) The repealing and amending Bill, 2014***

[English]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): I beg to move that leave be granted to introduce a Bill to repeal certain enactments and to amend certain other amendments.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to repeal certain enactments and to amend certain other amendments.”

The motion was adopted.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Madam, I introduce the Bill.

14. 04 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

(i) Need to develop Soron, a place of religious importance in Kasganj under Etah Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh as a tourist place and undertake beautification of the area

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (ETAH): Hon. Chairperson, my Parliamentary Constituency of Etah comprises two districts, Etah and Kasganj. In Kasganj district, there is an important place called Soron, also known as Sookar Kshetra. Crores of people believe that it was here that Lord Vishnu took the incarnation of Varaha, the boar incarnation. There stands a magnificent temple of Lord Varaha, where a large number of devotees come every day for darshan. Once a year, a grand month-long fair is organised, during which lakhs of devotees visit to offer prayers to Lord Varaha and take a holy dip in the Ganga waters. This sacred place has great potential to be developed as a prominent tourist destination.

* Treated as laid on the Table

Therefore, through you, I urge the Government to kindly respect the sentiments of crores of devotees and grant recognition to this area as a tourist centre, while sanctioning the required funds for its beautification and development.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi - Not present.

(ii) Need to improve medical facilities in rural areas of the country particularly in Jalore Parliamentary Constituency, Rajasthan.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVJI M. PATEL (JALORE): Hon. Chairperson, through a submission under Rule 377, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an important matter. For several years, there has been discussion about ensuring access to healthcare services for the entire population, similar to that of primary education. However, no concrete steps have yet been taken in this direction. On the other hand, the health situation in the country appears to be extremely grave. In rural India, only one-third of doctors are available, even though nearly two-thirds of our population lives in villages. The situation is even worse when it comes to specialist doctors. As a result, rural patients suffering from serious ailments are compelled to travel to cities for treatment, where, in many cases, diagnostic and treatment facilities are still inadequate. People often have to go to large civil hospitals in State capitals or to AIIMS for proper medical care. In villages and small towns, most of the doctors posted at health centres or hospitals find one excuse or another to avoid

serving there. Madam, there is a severe lack of diagnostic equipment in rural areas, as well as a shortage of trained medical assistants. The overall infrastructure is such that no doctor can work there smoothly. In this situation, poor villagers who fall ill or meet with accidents often lose their lives due to lack of timely treatment. Many families are forced to borrow money or sell their land and property for medical expenses. Statistically too, two-thirds of the country's doctors are concentrated in urban areas, but even there, medical treatment remains unaffordable for the poor. In my Parliamentary Constituency of Jalore–Sirohi, there is a serious shortage of doctors both in rural areas and in the towns. In Jalore and Sirohi districts, particularly in Saila, Siyana, Jaswantpura, Hadecha, Pindwara, and Revdar, there are no specialists available, resulting in a lack of family planning services. Posts of radiologists, dermatologists, psychiatrists, and dental specialists remain vacant in both districts. Although trauma centres exist and machines have been installed, patients are unable to benefit due to the absence of doctors. Madam, through you, I urge the Government to increase the allocation for healthcare and to take effective measures to strengthen the public health system so that essential medical facilities can reach every corner of the country.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Talk only about what is written.

SHRI DEVJI M. PATEL: Madam, that is exactly what I have read.

One or two words had to be slightly rearranged.

(iii) Need to provide a rail link between Varanasi and Gorakhpur via Azamgarh.

SHRIMATI NEELAM SONKER (LALGANJ): Hon. Chairperson Madam, I express my heartfelt gratitude to you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I also extend a warm welcome to all the Ministers and Hon. Members present in this august House.

Through you, Madam, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Hon. Minister of Railways to the need for a direct railway link between Varanasi and Azamgarh, and from Azamgarh to Gorakhpur. The road distance from Varanasi to Gorakhpur via Azamgarh is about 220 kilometres, which takes nearly six hours to cover. If a direct rail route is constructed, the total distance would be only about 130 kilometres, and the journey would take merely two to two and a half hours. At present, the existing railway route from Varanasi to Gorakhpur via Mau, Salempur, and Deoria covers a distance of 196 kilometres and takes six to seven hours. This route completely bypasses Azamgarh, which is an important part of eastern Uttar Pradesh (Purvanchal).

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to inform the Hon. Minister of Railways that lakhs of devotees and tourists from across the country and the world travel from Varanasi to Gorakhpur via Azamgarh to visit the holy shrines of Baba Vishwanath Ji, Gorakhnath Ji, and Pashupatinath Ji. Likewise, lakhs of Buddhist pilgrims from every corner of India and abroad travel from Sarnath to Kushinagar via Azamgarh. At the same time, Madam, important centres such as Mubarakpur, famous worldwide for the Banarasi saree industry, Nizamabad - renowned for its black pottery, and Atrauliya and Phoolpur - known for their 'Laal Sona' products, are suffering due to inadequate transport connectivity and infrastructure.

Hon. Minister of Railways, the proposed railway line of about 130 kilometres, including bridges over the rivers Tamsa, Ghaghra, and Rapti, would cost approximately Rs. 1,000 crore. Once this ambitious project takes shape, it will significantly strengthen development, prosperity, and employment opportunities in the backward region of Purvanchal.

(iv) Need to provide funds for construction of railway line between Barwadih (Jharkhand) and Chirimiri (Chhattisgarh)

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR SINGH (CHATRA): Hon. Chairperson Madam, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on an important matter under Rule 377. My Parliamentary Constituency, Chatra, is one of the most backward regions of the country and is also among the major Naxal-affected areas. The entire region is extremely underdeveloped and neglected in terms of infrastructure and connectivity. The Union Government has recognised it as a highly sensitive area and included it under special development projects. This region, however, holds immense potential to contribute significantly to the nation's economic growth, being rich in natural resources such as coal, aluminium, bauxite, dolomite, and other minerals. It is also important for agricultural produce, especially pulses. Yet, due to the lack of adequate railway connectivity, development in this area has remained severely hampered.

Hon. Chairperson Madam, there exists in my Constituency a railway junction, Barwadih, where ironically no railway line actually converges. Before Independence, a railway line was proposed from

Barwadih to Chirimiri. The line from Chirimiri to Ambikapur has already been completed, and now only the portion between Barwadih and Ambikapur remains to be connected. Land for this railway line was acquired even before Independence, and some construction work had also begun. The Chirimiri line connects the Palamu division of Jharkhand with Surguja in Chhattisgarh.

Through you, Madam, I urge the Hon. Minister of Railways to allocate the necessary funds for completing the proposed Barwadih–Chirimiri railway line and to set a definite timeline to ensure that the work is commenced and completed at the earliest.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON:

Shri Sushil Kumar Singh - Not present.

Shri Ashok Mahadeorao Nete - Not present.

(v) Need to permit operation of stone crushers in Yamunanagar district of Haryana

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA (AMBALA): Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the issue of the closed stone crusher zone in the Khizrabad area of Yamunanagar district, which falls within my Parliamentary Constituency of Ambala. Thousands of people had invested hundreds of crores of rupees to set up stone crushers in this region, providing employment to several thousand workers. However, the Government of Haryana shut them down citing environmental and other reasons, which has created a grave livelihood crisis for the affected people. I would also like to point out that, despite these restrictions, sand and gravel continue to be transported illegally from Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh into Haryana. The shortage of sand and gravel within the State has caused the prices of construction materials to soar, adversely affecting the real estate and road construction sectors.

Hon. Chairperson, through you, I urge the Government to permit mining activities in the State while ensuring full compliance with all mining and environmental regulations. This will help revive the pace of road and building construction, restore employment opportunities for those rendered jobless, and protect the investments of entrepreneurs who had invested their capital in this sector.

**(vi) Need to revive the unit of Cement Corporation of India
located in Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh**

SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA (MANDSAUR): Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an important issue. The Cement Corporation of India (CCI) unit at Nayagaon in Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh is the only public sector cement undertaking of the Government of India, established in 1980. It was once a world-class plant because of the superior quality of limestone available there. Despite having all the necessary facilities, 537 acres of land, an abundant supply of water, high-quality limestone, and excellent rail connectivity just 200 metres away, the plant was shut down. The plant had two units with capacities of 3,000 and 1,200 metric tonnes per day, respectively, and was a major source of employment, engaging 800 permanent workers and 2,500 contractual labourers. A well-developed township existed around the plant with residential quarters, a hospital, a bank, a school, a training centre, and a research facility for employees.

Madam, due to mismanagement by the CCI administration, the plant was closed in 1996 after unpaid electricity bills amounting to Rs. 9.66 crore accumulated.

Madam, this closure rendered thousands of workers jobless, and many small businesses dependent on the plant also collapsed.

Madam, it is unfortunate that tenders for the sale of the CCI unit have been issued two to three times.

Madam, I urge the concerned Minister to make arrangements for the smooth revival of this Cement Corporation of India unit.

(vii) Need to make it mandatory for doctors to write medical prescription in capital letters to obviate the possibility of misreading by medical stores

SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL (MEERUT): Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a very sensitive issue.

Madam, the prescriptions written by doctors on patients' slips are often written in a hasty, unclear, and confusing manner. The staff at medical stores are frequently not adequately qualified, which creates the risk that a medicine different from the one prescribed by the doctor might be dispensed. At times, such mistakes can have extremely serious consequences, the illness may worsen instead of improving. Similarly, while indicating the dosage or strength of a medicine, doctors often use a dot for a decimal point in mathematical notation. Due to unclear handwriting, the pharmacy staff sometimes misread it, for example, instead of 0.5 mg, they may read it as 5 mg, and end up giving medicine ten times stronger. One can easily imagine the disastrous effect such an error could have on the patient's health.

Through you, Madam, I urge that it be made mandatory for doctors to write prescriptions in capital letters, and instead of using dots and numerals for decimals, the dosage should be written in words. For example, “zero decimal five”, so that the medicines prescribed by doctors can be read clearly and correctly by the pharmacy staff.

**(viii) Need to undertake proper maintenance of Farakka
Barrage Project in West Bengal**

[English]

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR):

Farakka Barrage Project (FBP) could be considered as one of the temples in the modern India, abutting the districts of Malda and Murshidabad. It was commissioned in the year 1975. At that time the depth of water at Farakka measured more than 75 ft. But over the years, the depth has been reduced to 14ft, thanks to the siltation which is also affecting the lock- Gates of the said project. FBP is one of the largest Barrage projects in Asia which consists of 108 lock-Gates.

The purpose of constructing the Farakka Barrage Project was to regulate the water with an aim to feeding the river Bhagirathi for supplying adequate quantum of water to Kolkata port, which is also a river port.

The maintenance of Farakka Barrage Project is utterly poor, most of the Lock-gates do not function as a result of which the very purpose of the barrage is being defeated. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to take appropriate measure at the earliest.

**(ix) Need to open a Sainik School in Chamarajanagar district,
Karnataka**

SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA (CHAMARAJANAGAR): I would like to draw the kind attention of the august House regarding sanction of “Sainik School” at Chamarajanagar District (Karnataka State) of my Constituency. Chamarajanagar District of my Constituency covers 2,791 sq. kms. reserved and protected Forest Area, out of total area of 5,101 sq. kms. and having considerable hilly areas, BRT Tiger Project, Bandipur Tiger Project, Cauvery Wild Life Division, Kollegal and Kollegal Wild Life Division.

Chamarajanagar District is one of the most backward Districts in Karnataka State according to Dr. Nanjundappa Committee Report on redressal of “Regional Imbalance” and ranked 25th in the State Human Development Index. There are 4 Taluks, 16 Hoblies, 446 Habitated Villages, 66 Non-habitated Villages, 461 Revenue Villages and 120 Grama Panchayats. Population as per 2001 Census is 9. 65 lakhs. SC/ST Category in this District is 35. 6%. Karnataka State has already two Sainik Schools functioning at Bijapur and Coorg Districts. The opening of one more Sainik School in Chamarajanagar District would help the Children of backward rural

areas to get better education facilities at their doorstep. The opening of Sainik School in Chamarajanagar District would meet the demands of Defence in serving the Nation. In view of the above reasons, I would earnestly appeal to the Hon'ble Union Minister of Defence to take necessary steps to sanction and open "Sainik School" in Chamarajanagar District (Karnataka State) for the benefit of rural children at the earliest.

(x) Need to expedite operation of cargo services at Madurai Airport, Tamil Nadu and take measures for further development of the Airport

SHRI R. GOPALAKRISHNAN (MADURAI): The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu granted Rs. 200 crore for four-laning of the Outer Ring Road of Madurai. Fulfilling the infrastructure needs of Madurai City can be done by developing Madurai Airport. It will be a great boon to the City. All clearances for International Cargo operations except Custom Clearance, at Madurai were given but the cargo operations are yet to be started. Presently, the growers of vegetable, flowers and fruits in Madurai region depend on the far-off Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Thiruvananthapuram Airports involving unnecessary transport expenses and chance of damages to perishable items. Bilateral air services agreements are to be made with Malaysia, Singapore and UAE specifically meant for Madurai Airport. The existing runway should be expanded from 7500 ft to 10000 ft for upgradation. These steps will usher in development of Madurai.

Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government to expedite operation of cargo services and to take up necessary steps for further development of Madurai Airport in the public interest.

(xi) Need to undertake survey and construction of Arambag-Burdwan new railway line in West Bengal

SHRIMATI APARUPA PODDAR (ARAMBAG): There has been constant demand for rail link from commuters and vendors from all the areas of my Parliamentary Constituency regarding a New railway line from Arambagh to Burdwan covering two districts of Hooghly and Burdwan. Presently the commuters take a huge detour and go upto Seoraphuli Station in HWH-BWN main Line Section (60/65) kms and or have to change from Kamarkumdu station of HWH-BWN chord line section (47/50) kms. The link Station in the chord section is too high and poses a problem to the elderly people and the vendors to change for Burdwan Route. The people of my constituency is wholly dependent upon the agricultural products and need easy marketing access along with avoiding hazards of road journeys. I would, therefore, urge upon the Railways Ministry to immediately undertake survey and construction of “Arambag-Burdwan” new link line which would be of a great help to people of my constituency.

(xii) Need to expedite setting up of branches of scheduled commercial Banks in villages in Odisha having no banking facilities

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Odisha had about 48,000 unbanked villages on 1st April, 2012. According to the Reserve Bank of India guidelines, 5 per cent of these unbanked villages were to be covered by brick and mortar branches within a period of three years. As such, 2400 brick and mortar branches were to be set up in unbanked villages. About 100 such branches have been set up in the meantime. The pace of opening of these branches in unbanked villages needs to be expedited.

Further, this step alone would not be adequate considering the fact that as many as 4620 Gram Panchayats of the State today are unbanked. Each unbanked Gram Panchayat needs to be covered by a brick and mortar branch of a scheduled commercial bank within the 12th Five Year Plan period.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to issue suitable instructions in this regard which will help in their meaningful financial inclusion.

(xiii) Need to improve the BSNL telephone and broadband service in Buldhana Parliamentary Constituency, Maharashtra

[Translation]

SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV (BULDHANA): Hon. Chairperson Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the poor state of telecommunication services in my Parliamentary Constituency, Buldhana, Maharashtra. The post of General Manager (Telecommunications), BSNL, for this region has been lying vacant and needs to be filled immediately. Thousands of telephone and broadband connections in the area are not functioning because the necessary materials and equipment are not available. Moreover, all developmental activities related to telecommunications have come to a complete standstill. As a result, BSNL subscribers are surrendering their connections and shifting to private telephone operators and broadband service providers. The meetings of the district-level telecommunication committee have also not been held for several months.

Through this august House, I request the Government to issue necessary directions to restore and improve the telecommunication network in my Parliamentary Constituency of Buldhana, Maharashtra.

(xiv) Need to extend the period of Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh and take further steps for its development

[English]

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA (GUNTUR): After reorganization, the residuary State of Andhra Pradesh stands at a disadvantageous position not only because of Hyderabad being given to Telangana but also due to various other reasons. To overcome disadvantages, the Union Government decided on 1st March, 2014 to accord Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh for five years. The Prime Minister also assured this in the Rajya Sabha to help Andhra Pradesh come out of financial handicap. But so far no steps have been taken by the Government of India. Hence, I would request the Government of India to take following steps immediately so that Andhra Pradesh could come out of Rs. 16000 crore deficit and develop industrially:

1. Special Category Status should be extended to 15 years to establish level-playing field.
2. Implement Section 46(2) of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act which mandates the Government of India giving grants,

incentives in the form of special development package for Rayalseema and Northern Andhra Pradesh.

3. Incentives to industries in the form of tax concessions such as service tax, income tax, excise duty be given at par with Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
4. Power has to be allocated on the basis of Gadgil formula and 85 per cent of 2650 MW of installed capacity should be given to Andhra Pradesh.
5. In view of pathetic fiscal situation and steep fall in revenue growth and additional commitment due to pay revision, as mandated by Section 46(1) of Andhra Pradesh Act, Rs. 13,579 crore be given this year.
6. The Government of India assured to build new capital. It requires Rs. 3 lakh crore. I request to provide sufficient funds in this year itself to start building the capital.
7. Special Development Package of Rs. 15,000 crore also be given immediately.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Y.S. Subba Reddy – Not present.

(xv) Need to include Palakkad district in Kerala under Backward Region Grants Fund programme and modify the criteria for eligibility under the programme

SHRI P. K. BIJU (ALATHUR): Palakkad and Wayanad were the two districts in Kerala that were selected for assistance for the Backward Region Grants Fund (BRGF) initially. As per the restructured criteria of BRGF, Wayanad is considered a “core” district while Palakkad comes under the “peripheral” category with only five Gram Panchayats bordering Tamil Nadu gaining eligibility for BRGF assistance. The rest of the region in Palakkad district is no longer considered for BRGF assistance. Regions like Chittoor, Tharoor and Kuzhalmandam high in SC population and Paramhikkulam and Attappadi, high in ST population have been excluded from obtaining BRGF.

As per the records, Rs. 23 crore is the amount sanctioned for the year 2014-15. At the same time there have also been directions not to take up new works. However, each Gram Panchayat in the Palaghat district has executed development works to the tune of Rs. 9 lakh annually. These are long-term plans that require a period of five years to complete. As per the projects approved by the District

Planning Committee, administrative sanction has been received for works of Rs. 140 crore utilizing BRGF assistance and till date only Rs. 84 crore has been received. Even if the Rs. 23 crore sanctioned for ongoing works is considered, another Rs. 48. 73 crore will be required to pay-off the remaining works in progress.

By all parameters in terms of Scheduled Caste, Tribal population and backwardness in development, Palakkad district qualified for assistance and it is unfortunate that moves are afoot to discontinue it.

I, therefore, urge the Government to have a re-look at its decision to exclude Palakkad and modify the criteria for eligibility for BRGF in order to have a wider coverage.

HON. CHAIRPERSON:

Kunwar Haribansh Singh : Not present

(xvi) Need to provide jobs to local youth in Rajasthan atomic power project in Chittorgarh parliamentary constituency and also undertake development of the region under Corporate Social Responsibility programme

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI (CHITTORGARH): Hon. Chairperson, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an important issue concerning my Parliamentary Constituency, Chittorgarh. At the time of establishing the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station under the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), an agreement was made that, except for posts in categories 'A' and 'B', recruitment to 'C' and 'D' category posts would be carried out through the regional office, giving preference to unemployed youth from the local area. However, contrary to this commitment, outsiders are being employed, depriving local unemployed youth of these opportunities.

Through you, Madam, I urge that the NPCIL honour the agreement and ensure employment for local unemployed youth. Further, under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), proper attention should be given to the development of the surrounding

region, as very little work has been done so far under CSR initiatives. Additionally, since the area around the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station falls within a forest sanctuary, there have been obstacles in the construction of roads. Therefore, I would like to request that the Ministry of Environment issue the necessary No Objection Certificate at the earliest so that the road construction work can commence and the overall development of the region can be ensured.

(xvii) Need to convert National Highway No. 139 into four lane

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD): Hon. Chairperson, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the deplorable condition of National Highway 139. This highway starts from Patna, the capital of Bihar, and passes through two district headquarters, Arwal and Aurangabad (Bihar), as well as two sub-divisional headquarters, Daudnagar and Chhatarpur (Jharkhand), and further extends into Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh (Sarguja and Ambikapur districts). Thus, this road serves as an important link connecting the three States of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

At present, the stretch of this road from 15 kilometre (Naubatpur) to kilometre 33 (Patut, Patna) is merely 10 feet wide. From 33 kilometre to 50 kilometre, the condition of the road is poor. Between 70 kilometre and 132 kilometre, the width is about 16 feet, but its condition is also far from satisfactory. Beyond 132 kilometre up to 156 kilometre, that is, from the Bihar–Jharkhand border and further into Jharkhand, the road is in an extremely dilapidated condition. Due to the poor state of this highway, the general public faces severe difficulties while travelling, and there is a constant risk of accidents along this route.

It has come to notice that this highway is proposed to be upgraded to a two-lane road with the assistance of the World Bank. However, considering the heavy movement of small passenger vehicles and goods carriers on this route, converting it merely into a two-lane road will not adequately resolve the problem. Hon. Chairperson, this National Highway is not only a key route connecting Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, but it also serves as an important corridor linking Sonbhadra in Uttar Pradesh and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. Thus, it connects five States, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, through a single roadway. Given the large number of private and commercial vehicles, both small and large, that ply on this highway, I earnestly request that, in view of its significance and in public interest, National Highway 139 be developed into a four-lane (four-path) highway.

14.37 hrs

THE RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2014

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI D. V. SADANANDA GOWDA): Madam, I beg to move:

“That the Bill further to amend the Railways Act, 1989 be taken into consideration.”

Madam Chairperson, I would like to bring a small amendment to the Railway (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

In the Railways, false claims are increasing manifold. Similarly, multiple claims are being filed under the current provisions of law for the same incident. I can give you small statistics in this regard. The number of claims during 1994-95 was around 136 but that has increased to 8157 during 2010-11. Compensation paid also has increased from Rs. 26 lakh to nearly Rs. 164 crore. This is happening because there is no clarity in the provisions of the Railways Act and hence, I have brought this amendment.

Even the Claims Tribunal has observed several times that there should be some amendment to the rule so that there will be clarity

and thus, false claims will be curtailed. I have seen many occasions where claims are filed and even decreed in more than one Tribunal for the same incident. There are several reasons mentioned in the Act for multiple claims to be filed under the current provisions of law for the same incident.

One can file claim petition in three places. One petition can be filed in the place where the accident has taken place and the second is where he bought the ticket or pass and the third one is at the destination. So, in three places, one can file the claim petition.

A huge number of false claims is filed due to death which happens in some other place than in the railway platform or the vicinity of the Railways. But claims have been filed for the same. Earlier, claims were accepted under the provisions of untoward incident category. But the provisions of untoward incident category are not clear. Accidents are not mentioned under that category. Ninety-four per cent of the claims that have come under the 'untoward incidents' category are due to the accidental falling, which is a clear indication that there is a misuse of this provision. Lack of proper definition of 'accidental falling' has also contributed to false claims. So, the Ministry of Railways had to curtail these false claims. We are simply penalised for no mistake of ours.

Negligence of the passengers and misadventures of passengers some times lead to accidents, but finally claims are being preferred against the Railways.

So, to minimise all these things, we want to go for a small amendment. Even the Railways Claims Tribunal on several occasions has observed that there is a need to amend the Act in order to curtail these false claims or multiple claims. For that reason, I seek an amendment to section 109 wherein I seek that the Railways where the accident took place should be made as a party. If the Railways where the accident took place is made as a party, he will be aware of where all the claims have been filed. So, to avoid this multiplicity, I seek this amendment.

I seek an amendment to Section 123. The definition of 'accidental falling' needs to be made clear. Then only there will be clarity as far as these claims are concerned. For that I seek an amendment to Section 123 of the Act.

For speedy disposal, I seek a small amendment to Section 124 of the Act. Certainly, I hope, these amendments will bring down the false and multiple claims. Certainly the Railways will benefit from that. For those reasons, I am moving these amendments.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Motion moved:

“That the Bill further to amend the Railways Act, 1989, be taken into consideration.”

SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPUZZHA): Hon. Chairperson, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

This small piece of legislation has been brought here to amend the provisions, as the hon. Minister rightly pointed out, of Section 109 and Section 123 of the Railways Act, 1989. The intention of the amendment to Section 109 is very clear. It is to avoid the misuse and duplication of claims towards compensation and it is also meant to prevent the false claims. But under sub-clause 2 of clause C of Section 123 of the Railways Act, 1989, the Government's move to change the definition of the 'untoward accident' is quite objectionable. What does the Government mean by this definition?

As per the Statement of Objects and Reasons, most of the cases of accidents is falling, arising out of falling down from the train are because of negligence, carelessness and misadventure on the part of the passengers while entraining or de-training a moving train knowing that any accident may take place. This is a very cruel argument, Mr. Minister.

We had a case. I think the Minister is also aware of the case. I will just cite that case as an example. It is about one Sowmya in Kerala. The poor lady was travelling in a train in the women's compartment alone. One criminal, named Govindaswamy, brutally tried to rape her, and attack her. To escape from being raped, she jumped from the train and she is no more now. She has been killed. Who is responsible for this accident? Is it due to the negligence of the traveler? Is it due to the negligence of that poor lady, Sowmya? In such a scenario, how can you given a definition like this?

In my own constituency, Alapuzzha, we had 118 unmanned level crossings till six months back.

Over the period of five years, we have manned all the unmanned level crossings. Now, there is no unmanned level crossing in my constituency. But the thing is that in the last five years, we lost around 60 lives. Those who travelled through the unmanned level crossings were hit by train and they lost their valuable lives. Are the passengers responsible? Is it due to the negligence of the passengers? Is it that reason? For example, a taxi driver is taking somebody. In one case, two foreign tourists were killed. They did not know about the unmanned level crossings. The taxi driver took these tourists and other passengers. They went through the

unmanned level crossing. A train came and hit them. They lost their lives. How can you define this? As per the definition, you are telling that this is not due to the responsibility of the Railways. Who is then responsible when a passenger is entraining and detraining? What is the job of the RPF? In every station, there should be an RPF. When a poor passenger is entraining or detraining, sometimes, he falls. While falling, his life is lost. Sometimes, he suffers severe injury. By saying that this is not due to the negligence of the Railways, how can the Railways withdraw from this type of a moral responsibility? The Indian Railways are one of the biggest social organisations in the world. We are really proud of the Indian Railway. Hon. Minister, I know that you are a very soft man, a very kind enough man. But by bringing forward this type of a small piece of legislation, you are showing that the Indian Railways are trying to take decision against the passengers' will and wish. I am not objecting to the first amendment. I would request the hon. Minister to rethink about pressing the second amendment. That is what my humble request to you.

When this Bill is being discussed in the House, naturally, issues pertaining to the Railways will come back. I am very much thankful to you because you are convening a meeting for the Keralites even

though you have totally neglected the entire State of Kerala and some other parts of the country while presenting the Railway Budget.

Here, I should bring to your notice one thing. We are talking about safety of the passengers. Not only you talk but your predecessors also talked about safety of passengers in respect of unmanned level crossings. I gave you an example of the unmanned level crossing. What about the RoBs and the under-passes? In respect of Kerala alone, we have given 13 proposals. When it comes to the RoBs, you know that 50 per cent expenditure is met by the State Government. The State Government already informed you that 13 RoBs should be included in this year's Budget. Out of the 13, not a single RoB has been included.

Then, I have already told you that around 118 unmanned level crossings have been made manned in the last five years. It becomes a serious safety issue. A Station Master has to control at least 6-7 manned level crossings. How can he do this? Therefore, there is a need for the interlocking system between manned level crossings. The Railways have already promised that it is giving top priority for the interlocking system but the amount sanctioned for the interlocking system is very much meagre. Therefore, my humble

request to the hon. Minister on the safety ground is that interlocking and manned level crossings should be given top priority and sufficient funds should be allotted for this purpose.

The Minister stated that hon. Members are asking for new trains and there is no space for the same. All the tracks are congested. If we are introducing automatic signalling system, we can provide more trains to Kerala. Why don't we introduce automatic signalling system in Kerala? At least from Coimbatore to Ernakulam stretch, this should be introduced on experimental basis. ... (*Interruptions*) Majority of my speech is on amendments based on security, safety and claims of accidents. We have to give priority to safety. Safety should be given utmost priority. There should be sufficient infrastructure in the Railways. I hail from Kerala and I want to say something about my State. That is what I am telling. Is it not relevant? It is highly relevant because Kerala needs it; Kerala deserve it. I am not going to take much time because hon. Minister has assured us that he is going to intervene in this matter. That is why, I am bringing these for his consideration. There are some major issues like doubling, electrification which are related to safety aspects. I am again pressing on the definition – amendment to section 129 – and the same should be changed.

[Translation]

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL (DOMARIYAGANJ): Hon. Presiding Madam, I am deeply thankful to you for allowing me to speak in support of the Railway (Amendment) Act, 2014, which has been presented by the Hon. Minister of Railways. While introducing this amendment, the Hon. Minister has elaborated in detail why it became necessary to amend the Indian Railways Act, 1979, which was quite old, and he has clearly defined the objectives of this amendment. Today, the Railways are regarded as the lifeline of the nation. It is one of the largest organisations in the world and serves as a vital institution for the people of this country. Every day, nearly 11,000 passenger trains operate tirelessly, carrying about three crore passengers day and night. The Railways neither stop for holidays nor for festivals, they continue to function ceaselessly, ensuring that passengers reach their destinations safely. Naturally, we take pride in this great institution. In his Budget speech, the Hon. Minister had clearly stated that efforts would be made to further improve this lifeline, and he has indeed taken concrete steps in that direction. It is not merely a matter of making announcements about introducing new trains, laying new railway lines, undertaking gauge conversion, or launching bullet trains, the Hon. Minister has also reaffirmed his

commitment to arranging the necessary resources to fulfil these plans. I extend my gratitude to him on behalf of this august House. When the schemes were announced, it was stated in this very House that several of them would be implemented under the PPP mode. There were proposals to establish medical colleges within railway premises, to reserve admissions for the children of railway employees, and to develop modern markets, medical colleges, and engineering colleges. However, despite these announcements, the resources envisaged under the PPP mode have not yet materialised before the Railways. Madam, the people of the country have great expectations whenever any Railway Minister presents such plans in Parliament. It is naturally hoped that these schemes will be implemented and translated into reality for the benefit of the common people. Yet, the challenge lies in the fact that while railway fares cannot be raised, since the country's poorest and most common citizens travel by train, and while Indian Railways still offer the cheapest fares in the world, the institution also faces a shortage of financial resources. Any increase in fares, from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, places a burden on the common man and provokes strong reactions. Therefore, balancing affordability with investment remains essential. In this regard, the introduction of FDI in the

railway sector is a welcome move. I firmly believe that with foreign investment and the initiatives announced by the Hon. Minister, the Railways will be able to successfully implement their ambitious plans and continue to serve the nation effectively.

As far as this Amendment is concerned, I fully respect the intent of the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister has rightly pointed out that there have been multiple claims in cases of railway accidents, whether a person has been injured, lost his life, or suffered any other harm. In several instances, claims were being filed at multiple locations: one at the place where the ticket was purchased, another at the destination, and yet another at the place where the accident occurred. Consequently, the Railways were burdened with numerous duplicate or overlapping claims for the same incident. To prevent such misuse and to ensure proper and fair settlement of compensation cases, the Railways have proposed that in future, the Railway Administration of the area where the accident occurs must also be made a party to the claim. It is to address this issue and streamline the process that this Amendment has been brought forward.

14.55 hrs.

(Shri Ramen Deka *in the Chair*)

Today, we live in the age of computers. I would like to suggest to the Hon. Minister that even if a person files claims at three different places, the problem can be solved through computerisation. If all claim details are entered into a computerised system, then as soon as the particulars of an accident victim are entered for registration, the system will automatically indicate whether a similar claim has already been filed elsewhere for the same incident. I believe this issue can be effectively resolved in this manner. As for the amendments made to Sections 109 and 123, they are, of course, minor in nature. You have rightly stated that passenger safety is being given due attention. With regard to claims, I would suggest that they should also be time-bound. If there is a loss of life, the claim should be settled within a specified time frame. If this is considered, it will undoubtedly benefit the general public. You have mentioned the amendment to Section 123. As one of our colleagues observed, accidents occur in various circumstances, sometimes while boarding the train, resulting in death, sometimes due to other reasons. I recall an instance in Australia where a passenger's foot got trapped in the train, and fellow passengers collectively shook the train to free it. Such incidents remind us that, as human beings, it is our duty to assist fellow passengers in distress. As for the

amendment under discussion, I fully agree with the Hon. Minister when he says that -

[English]

“Provided that no compensation shall be payable under this section by the railway administration if the passenger dies or suffers injury due to suicide or attempted suicide by him; self-inflicted injury; his own criminal act’ his own carelessness or negligence.”

15.00 hrs.

[Translation]

It is understandable that if a person commits suicide, compensation cannot naturally be granted. However, if a bona fide passenger is travelling and dies in an accident en route, and there is no one accompanying him at that time, how will his dependants or family members be able to prove whether the accident occurred due to his negligence or despite taking all necessary precautions? Because, as per the rule that you have laid down, which is provided in the provision, please read it carefully:- [English] Provided that for the purposes of this clause, it may be established and proven by the

passenger or on his behalf that he had taken reasonable care and precautions to avoid the occurrence of such incident.

[Translation]

If a person has died in an accident, who can possibly testify that he had taken all due precautions and yet lost his life? Naturally, in such cases, how can the deceased or his dependants be expected to prove that the death occurred despite exercising caution? Therefore, while this Amendment seeks to prevent multiple or fraudulent claims, I would urge the Hon. Minister to consider whether it might inadvertently shift the burden of proof onto the victim or his family requiring them to establish that all precautions were taken and still the accident occurred. I believe that in your effort to curb false or duplicate claims, we must ensure that no genuine or bona fide passenger, someone who was travelling with a valid ticket and who met with an accident due to reasons beyond his control, suffers injustice. As you have rightly stated above, and as mentioned clearly in the provisions:- [English] When in the course of working a railway, an incident of accidental falling occurs, then, whether or not there has been any wrongful act, neglect or default on the part of the railway administration such as would entitle a passenger who has

been injured or the dependent of a passenger who has been killed to maintain an action and recover damages in respect thereof.... .

[Translation]

You provide *ex gratia* compensation, and on the one hand, the clause above clearly recognises that whether or not there is any fault on the part of the Railways, if a person loses his life, he or his family has the right to claim compensation. The Hon. Minister, I am sure, will kindly ensure that there is no contradiction between this principle and the amendment being proposed. It is natural, Madam, that in any accident where a passenger loses his life, suffers a disability, or sustains serious injury, such as the loss of limbs, the question of negligence should not deprive the family of rightful compensation. While you are rightly ensuring that passengers have a right to claim compensation regardless of whether the Railways were careful or negligent, placing the burden of proof upon the victim's family would, I believe, be extremely difficult. I would suggest instead that claims be computerised and limited to one per incident, and that every claim be time-bound for disposal. Many railway passengers who die in accidents are the sole breadwinners of their families. When such a tragedy occurs, their dependants are left helpless and destitute. Therefore, while *ex gratia* assistance is

commendable, it must be uniform across the country. At present, we see varying amounts, Rs. 2 lakh in one place, Rs. 3 lakh or Rs. 5 lakh elsewhere. For instance, in the tragic accident at Maghar in Sant Kabir Nagar in Tripathi Ji's constituency, Rs. 2 lakh was announced. There should be a standardised and uniform policy for ex gratia payments in all railway accidents, irrespective of whether the cause was mechanical failure or any other reason. The provisions you have made, Hon. Minister, take into account both the interests of passengers and those of the Railways. Our collective objective must be to ensure that every person who suffers loss or injury in a railway accident receives just and timely compensation. Knowing the Hon. Minister's sincere intent, I am confident that he will duly consider this matter.

With these words, I conclude my remarks and express my full support for the amendment introduced by the Hon. Minister.

[English]

SHRI V. PANNEERSELVAM (SALEM): Thank you Chairman, Sir. I would also like to thank our hon. Amma, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for giving me this opportunity.

Sir, I rise to support the Railways (Amendment) Bill brought forward by the hon. Minister of Railways before the House.

While supporting the Bill, I have some reservations in the proposed amendments and I request the Minister of Railways to ponder over them and correct them, so that genuine people are not put to undue hardship.

The proposed amendment Bill says that the aggrieved or injured passengers or the near and dear ones of the lost, have to make application before the Claims Tribunal of the Railways where the incident occurred, in case of injury and loss. This is because the Railways feel that the injured passengers make false claims, causing loss to the Exchequer. Since the Railways want to prevent this misuse, they are restricting it, so that applications can be filed only in the jurisdiction of the Railways where the incident occurred.

Take the case of long-distance travel. If some injury or some loss occurs mid-way, the Railways, with the present amendment, requires

that the claims must be made under the jurisdiction mid-way. In this case, the injured or the near-ones, in case of loss, has to go all the way again and again, to complete inquiries and other formalities, taking all his time, energy and money. The Minister may also admit that one has to go several times for compensation. This may cause undue hardship to the passengers. The Railway Minister may have the good intention to save money of the Railways, but passengers, who are already aggrieved, would be put to severe loss and they would undergo several untold miseries before they get compensation. At times, they would have even spent much more than the compensation amount.

I request the Railway Minister to consider the genuine cases and bring certainty in the rules so that the claimants are not subjected to untold misery. There should be a clear instruction so that the aggrieved would not be required to go again and again. It should be made clear that after the claim is made, the subsequent visits could be done at the 'station of origin' or the 'destination station', convenient to the passengers. With the technological improvements in India, this could be easily handled. The Minister should ponder over this and clarify this.

The second provision in the Bill is that ‘accidental falling’ due to negligence, carelessness and misadventure, is sought to be excluded from payment of compensation. The Minister of Railways is trying to make a case that in cases of such ‘accidental falls’, there is no fault on the part of the Railways and therefore, compensation need not be paid.

Here, I would like to ask the hon. Minister that how many such cases of ‘accidental falling’ had happened and what is the total amount of money that the Railways have paid as compensation during the last five years. When it is going to be very negligible money, why should he indulge himself in this big exercise of bringing in such an amendment to the Act?

Moreover, in such cases, who will decide whether a death has happened due to negligence or carelessness? [Translation] Here, we have two cases in the recent past, where the TTE had pushed two women in two separate incidents since they did not possess valid tickets. It may be true that the poor women would not have been travelling without proper tickets resulted in their deaths. The TTEs should have allowed the law to take its own course.

I would like to know from the Minister whether, in these two cases, compensation had been paid to the families of these women

and what action had been taken by the Railways, apart from issuing memorandums and suspending them.

Coming back to the number of casualties resulting from the train accidents during the year 2013-14, the total number of persons killed was 42 and the number of persons injured was 85. These were the figures of the Railway Ministry. The amount of compensation paid is approximately Rs. 2 crore. This amount is just meagre when compared to the revenue being earned by the Railways. I feel that this is not a huge burden on the Railways.

So, the hon. Railway Minister should consider all these in all seriousness that they deserve and rectify some of them. With the hope that the Railway Minister would take care of these things, I support the Bill, and I thank the Chairman for the opportunity given to me to participate in this discussion.

SHRIMATI APARUPA PODDAR (ARAMBAG): Thank you, Sir, for allowing me to speak on the Bill in this august House. I would like to thank my hon. Chief Minister, Kumari Mamata Banerjee, and also the people of West Bengal who have voted for us and sent 34 Members of Parliament from Bengal.

Sir, I rise to speak on the Railways (Amendment) Bill. The Bill adds a new section 124(B) to the Railway Act, 1989 to empower the Railways to deny compensation claims if it feels that the victim fell down from train due to his own fault. The Ministry has also sought to make the Zonal Railways in whose jurisdiction an accident takes place a party to the claim so that the authenticity of the case can be ascertained. ... (*Interruptions*)

You are all senior Members and I am the junior most. Please allow me to speak.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please continue.

SHRIMATI APARUPA PODDAR: I would like to say that accidental death due to falling down from train is not just due to the negligence of the passenger. Most of the passengers who died due to accidental falling from train were economically poor people who could not avail reservation, upper class facilities, and travelled in ordinary second-class compartments. The number of passengers of

travelling far exceeds the number of seats. Hence, the passengers have been forced to undertake their journey by sitting or standing near the gates and accidentally fell from trains. Therefore, I would like to urge upon the Railway Minister to consider paying compensation to the families of the victims who died due to accidental falling from trains.

It will be practically impossible to prove that accidental falling is due to the negligence of the passenger and not the Railways. Hence, I propose that such cases should be considered sympathetically, and the proposed amendment should include this part of compensation process also.

The proposed amendment should include the timeframe during which the claims of compensation should be settled by the Railways. Generally, the inquiry to determine the cause of negligence is made by the Railways. I propose that the Inquiry Committee to determine the case of negligence should include representative from the Railway User Committee, specially the representative of the passengers. This should ensure the transparency and timely completion of the inquiry.

The rationale behind the amendment is the Railways finding 98 per cent of the accidents that reached the Claim Tribunals were due

to accidental fallings. The number rose from 136 in 1995 to 8,175 in 2011, as mentioned by the Minister. The average annual payment for such claims has been about Rs. 134 crore , rising from Rs. 26 lakh in 1994-95.

The Railways feels that there is an organised racket and they have brought the Bill to prevent malpractices. But I feel that the Bill is anti-poor people. The Railway officers have been trying to bring the Bill since 2008. But in 2009, the then Railway Minister, Ms. Mamata Banerjee had felt that the Bill was against the poor people. So, the amendment would make it more difficult for the poor people, who were genuine victims of accidental falling from trains, in lodging complaints.

Presently, a victim or surviving relative can register a claim case at the place where the tickets were purchased as well as the final destination. This should not be changed.

The compensation amount should be determined keeping in view the economic condition, asset liabilities and earning capacity of the affected passengers.

Corruption is there in the railway bureaucracy and the law will not change it. The Railways should ensure that all those poor people suffering from railway accidents are compensated adequately.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (DHENKANAL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would simply put forward a few points and try to conclude as quickly as possible.

First of all, let us assume and we all believe, Railways is an institution and the accident victims are individuals. So, the onus always lies on the institutions to rectify things. Here in India, what we see is we keep on changing of the law without putting the responsibilities on anybody.

For example, suppose I am taking a train from New Delhi Railway Station, that is, Northern Railway. When I am on my way from New Delhi to Bangalore, I probably cross four or five zones. I cross Northern Railway; I cross South-Central Railway, Western Railway, Central Railway and may be Southern Railway. Then, there will be jungles and a lot of areas which are uninhabited. It is very difficult for an average passenger to know which jurisdiction the train is passing through. In that situation, suppose there is an accident and I die... (*Interruptions*)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No. Do not say like this.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (DHENKANAL): Okay! It does not matter. 'X' dies. Thank you.

My point is that the distraught family members, the wife or the father or the mother, -- I am an orphan, so this does not apply to me - - are expected to find out exactly which Railway is responsible for the death. In such a situation, what happens is that as you know when there is a murder in a town or in an urban area or even in a rural area, suppose the murder has taken place at a particular point and on one side let us assume the jurisdiction of Parliament Street Police Station comes up to here and on the other side it is the jurisdiction of Connaught Place Police Station, both the SHOs will claim that this is not in their jurisdiction because nobody wants to take the responsibility. I am sure all the hon. MPs encounter this kind of a problem so often. So, are we going to ask the family of the deceased, the murdered person's family to point out which police station, which police officer should investigate the murder? That is physically not possible. So, in this case, what I would suggest is that the hon. Minister and the Railway Ministry should consider that when somebody is filing multiple claims--the incident is one, the accident is singular, the person affected is either one person dead or injured--it is the bounden duty of the institution to collect all the applications, whichever are filled, no matter where, bring them together to the Claims Tribunal and make one Railway

Administrative Authority responsible. That onus lies on the Railways.

Now, in this Bill what I understand is that the onus is being put on the affected person. I am dead. My family has to find out. I think this needs re-consideration because you cannot expect the affected person to find out which Railway is or which administrative zone is responsible.

In our State we have a programme called Harishchandra Yojana. In that programme, what happens is, when somebody dies in a village, they have to lodge a complaint at the Block Development Office. It is not a complaint. They have to lodge a report at the Block Development Office, and immediately the Block Development Officer is authorised to dispense with Rs. 5,000 for cremation. This is a novel thing. Everybody takes their leader's name. I am not taking the name. But yes, it is an incredible idea, and really and sincerely from my heart I appreciate this. It has benefited people in my constituency and this is an idea that has been brought about by Mr. Naveen Patnaik.

My point is that the Railways should also evolve a mechanism whereby if somebody dies, an immediate *ex gratia* payment is made

available within 24 hours for a poor family to carry out the last rites of the deceased person.

My last point, before you ring the bell, is about the accidental injury. When accident happens, the Railways are claiming that they have to also mention where the accident happened. Like other speakers clarified and my colleague from the AIADMK also said that very clearly, who is going to certify whether the negligence is on the part of the travelling commuter or on the part of the Railway officials? It is going to one extreme end to say that the TTEs sometimes push, out of a running train, passengers who are without tickets. There are such frustrated debauched people. We admit it. There is no doubt about it. But let us also understand one thing that our Railways are extremely old fashioned. Simply by having automatic door closing systems, we could avoid many accidents and save precious lives, take the figure also very high. It saves money for the Railways and it also saves headache for the Railways. So, they should think of automating the doors so that the doors do not open before the train stops and the doors close before the train starts. These are the two points which I would like the Minister to look into. Let us not give all the powers to the Railway authorities that

they can discard expectations at will. There should be some guidelines in this regard.

DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE (KALYAN): Thank you, hon. Chairman, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak in this august House. I take this opportunity to pay my respects and bow my head before hon. Shivsena Pramukh Balasaheb Thackeray and our party Chief, hon. Shri Uddhavji Thackeray, who gave me blessings to represent a constituency in Parliament, which uses Railways on a daily basis and contributes heavily to the revenue of the Railways.

With due consideration of the amendment that has been brought by the hon. Minister for Railways, I would like to emphasize on the following important points to be considered.

Indian Railways have played a significant role in the development of India since its inception, since 1853. Indian Railways today have the largest passenger operation amongst the entire railway network in the world, carrying about 25 million passengers daily.

First and foremost, I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Minister mainly to Mumbai and suburban local railway to the fact that many of the fatal accidents have been caused due to lower heights of the platforms or overcrowding. During the rush hour, due to a very short halt at stations, people have to struggle to get into the train in order that they do not miss their livelihood.

While the platform height is not raised, accidents will remain the sole responsibility of the Railways. Lower platform heights have claimed many lives and left hundreds of commuters disabled. To sight a serious case, I would like to shed light on Monica More mishap. Monica lost both her arms at the Ghatkopar station, north-east Mumbai, on January 2011, when she fell off a packed suburban train, into a yawning gap between the platform and the train bogey. The brave girl is currently armed with prosthetic arms and is pursuing her studies. So, I would ask the House, whose fault is it – the Railways or the poor girl?

Already local trains are overloaded four times their carrying capacity per trip. Keeping this in view, the responsibility of accidents to a major extent also lies on the Railways and not the passengers alone.

The railway coaches, which are supposed to carry four persons per square metre are today carrying 16 persons. Lakhs of commuters travel to and fro from Kalyan-Thane region to Mumbai to earn their bread. The overcrowding of bogies and the urgent need to reach office compels passengers to take risks and travel on footboards or to struggle to catch the train at any cost. This is the *krupadrishti* of Railways on the local commuters from Kalyan to Mumbai every

day, which has been bestowed by the outgoing Government and we have to undo this at any cost!

Inadequate facilities are another important reason for railway accidents. In the year 2013 alone 3500 people lost their lives on suburban railways and 23,473 people have been killed by Mumbai suburban trains in the last 11 years. The rate of these accidents must be brought down drastically to ensure commuters safety.

I would like to draw your attention to a recent incident in Telangana where 15 school children lost their lives in bus and train mishap in Medak district at an unmanned crossing, which could have been avoided if there was a manned crossing.

The same case has been brought out by a recent incident of deaths at an unmanned crossing, which is at Dativali in my constituency and which always finds someone in the trap and one loses life. Can we not spare some money to convert these unmanned crossings into manned crossings and stop this avoidable death scenario? There are 13000 unmanned crossings across the country. Deaths at unmanned crossings are 39 per cent, which is still higher since 2005.

Apart from this, ROBs are the need of the hour and very much essential at Diva junction and Thakurli in my constituency due to

traffic congestion and the rate of accidents. Dangerous level crossings invite unwarranted accidents, which risk the life of commuters. These ROBs should be constructed here at the earliest.

Dombivali and Kalyan, despite being the topmost revenue earners for the Railways by contributing more than Rs. 99.34 crore over the last five years, are left empty handed when it comes to commuter facilities. So is the case of the whole Mumbai-Thane region, which gets a raw deal in all development plans.

Through your medium, I would like to request the Government and the hon. Minister of Railways to go through the figures of revenue earned and the amount spent on facilities and conveniences to passengers.

Despite the norms, even basic services like ambulance facilities are not available at many stations.

The passenger rush at peak hours can be effectively reduced by putting into action more 15-car rakes and increased number of trips. Seventy-two such trips were announced by the previous Government on Central Railway Circuit, but sadly, only 32 trips actually materialised. Increased number of rakes and trips will give respite to commuters. Apart from this, a dedicated coach like ladies' coach should be allocated to senior citizens and students.

It is true that an amendment is needed in view of certain people misusing the rules to their advantage and seeking benefits from more than one Railway Department. This is not only malicious but also against the rules of decency. However, at the same time, the Railways also need to pay close attention to at least follow their own norms of facilities to be made available at railway stations. This alone will be a confidence-building step for the commuters and then, the number of complaints will also be reduced.

I hereby request the Government to re-think on the Railway (Amendment) Bill which seeks to amend Section 123 of the principal Act because you cannot gauge the Mumbai and the suburban local trains on similar grounds as of the Indian Railways as it will be injustice to lakhs of commuters travelling through the Mumbai suburban local trains. So, I would request the hon. Railway Minister to exclude this clause from the amendment Bill for the Mumbai and the suburban local trains.

Till the frequency of trains is increased, facilities are increased and platform height is raised, these mishaps are unavoidable, and the injured or deceased should get the compensation.

DR. RAVINDRA BABU (AMALAPURAM): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. In India, everyday 2.5 crore people travel by the railways. This means that in every 60 days, the whole of India would have travelled. That means, every individual in India would have travelled by train six times in every year. Unfortunately, the fact is that about 30 to 40 crore of Indians have not seen the railways so far. I, unfortunately, belong to that region where people have not even seen the railway track so far. I come from Vanaseema where Kotipalli-Narsapur railway line has been conceived and granted by the Central Government, but the Railway Minister has been silent on this project though the Prime Minister had promised action. I have chosen this occasion to speak about it because in the amendment Bill, there are some litigation prone sentences.

The Railway Ministry is a peculiar Ministry. It has got its own Budget; it has got its own officers; and it has got a Minister belonging to some State. Our experience so far has been that whenever a Minister comes from a particular State, in that particular State only the Railway develops and no other State gets any attention in the matter of railways. Therefore, my constituency people, in their innocence, ask me as to why the Railway Minister cannot be rotated every year so that the Railway Minister can be there from each State

and every State will have representation in the Railways. Otherwise, the rest of the country gets neglected and the railway develops only in the State the Minister belongs to. This has been amply made clear in the successive Railway Budgets. In this year's Railway Budget also, it was very clear.

In my State Andhra Pradesh, oil and natural gas are available in abundance. So, there is a lot of industrial potentiality, but it has been totally neglected. The Railway Minister, in his own words, has admitted that there is a Management Group constituted in order to avoid delays in execution of projects. The delay in execution of projects always leads to delay in project completion, cost escalation and other spiral effects. Therefore, he said that there are 29 projects in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana which require Rs. 20,000 crore, but the sanction is only of Rs. 20 crore. This itself shows how delay is in-built at the time of sanction of the Budget. It should be avoided. Avoidable things should be avoided. I request the hon. Railway Minister to look into this matter.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the insertion of new section 124B dealing with compensation on account of accidental falling. Here, sub-clause (d) of the proviso reads "his own

carelessness or negligence”. The words ‘carelessness’ and ‘negligence’ have not been defined. It simply says:

“Provided that for the purposes of this clause, it may be established and proved by the passenger or on his behalf that he had taken reasonable care and precaution to avoid occurrence of such incident.”

This will lead to a lot of litigation. It is creating a paradise for the lawyers and litigants. Please avoid such litigation-prone sentences, and Act in an innocent or highly uneducated, illiterate country like India.

I would also request the hon. Railway Minister to pay less attention to trains like bullet trains, which require Rs. 900 crore per km. whereas the ordinary train requires only Rs. 9 crore per km. I am saying this because our country cannot afford it. The whole Railway Budget deficit has been projected as Rs. 2,28,000 crore or something, which is actually required and the Railway Minister does not have that much money. Further, a lot of new projects have been announced. If this is the fate of the Railways, then accidents are bound to happen and there is some amount of negligence inbuilt in the policy / Budget itself. So, let us avoid such pitfalls in the Budgets

and the amendments of the Acts. Instead of focusing more on amendments, let us focus on the main Act that gives a lot of relief to the accident victims. This amendment gives only discretionary arbitrariness and bureaucratic vagaries to the Railway Ministry so that they can do away with paying compensation to the poor hapless passengers who are below poverty line and travelling in the Indian Railways.

[Translation]

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL (PASCHIM CHAMPARAN): Hon. Chairperson, I fully support the Railway (Amendment) Bill, 2014. I will not take much time. First, with regard to what Shri Tathagata Satpathy said, in my view the Hon. Minister has clarified that a claimant may approach any Tribunal, and wherever the claim is filed, the Railway Administration will appear there and examine the claim at that very place.

Second, as to the suggestion made by our esteemed Shri Venugopal regarding Section 123, the case of 'Soumya' that he referred to is not covered by this Section, since it pertains to boarding and alighting. I fully agree with Shri Satpathy that automated gates should be installed. Only then can such incidents be prevented. In Mumbai and Kolkata, we see that in local trains twenty people try to board at once, and if someone meets with an accident while boarding, it would be somewhat unjust to say that it occurred solely because of his own action.

Sir, my main concern pertains to **Section 124-B**. I have thoroughly studied the 1989 Bill as well. In this Bill, a new clause **(d)** has been added in a very simple manner. The previous Bill already had four clauses. Normally, the procedure is that if a fifth

clause is added, it should appear as the fifth in sequence. However, for reasons unknown, the new clause has been inserted as the fourth, while another clause has been moved to the fifth position.

Just now, an Hon. Member described it as “one’s own negligence or omission”. The clause reads: “In the event of a passenger’s death or personal injury, the Railway Administration shall also be made a party before the Claims Tribunal.” Sir, I fail to understand this. Under Section 124(d), relating to death or injury of a passenger, it states: “For the purposes of this section, it shall be proved and established by or on behalf of the passenger that he had taken all reasonable precautions to avoid such an occurrence.” This reminds me of an advertisement for a vest, whose slogan was “Bade Aaram Se” (“With great ease”). In that advertisement, a Nawab dies, and nine people are accused of his murder. Finally, the hero of the advertisement says, “Let the Nawab himself tell us who the murderer is.” The Nawab then rises from death for a minute, names the gardener as the murderer, and dies again. Such a provision, though framed in an innocuous manner, is impractical and somewhat absurd in reality.

Hon. Chairperson, I fully support this Bill, but I would like to make one suggestion. No matter how much economic burden it may

cause, I urge the Hon. Minister to give serious thought to this issue, because it goes against the core philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party. When we speak of the weakest and the last person in society, we must remember that passengers travelling in First AC or Second AC rarely meet with such sudden fatal accidents. Our Party's guiding principles are based on Integral Humanism and Antyodaya, propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Ji, who tragically died while travelling by train from Lucknow to Patna. We have formed the Government four times, yet we still do not know the true cause of the death of this revered leader. If a peanut seller at Mughalsarai Station had not recognised him and reported it, we might not even have identified his body. I request the Hon. Minister to give this matter due consideration. I would also place greater responsibility upon the previous UPA Government. Even Hon. Mamata Banerjee had said in 2010 that all unmanned level crossings would be removed by 2015. Four different Ministers came and went during the UPA tenure, but even now only about 34 percent of that work has been completed.

Hon. Chairperson, through you, I urge the Hon. Minister to take the issue of unmanned level crossings very seriously. The situation in my Parliamentary Constituency is even more distressing. On 7

June, a tragic accident occurred where ten members of a single family lost their lives in a railway accident. Initially, there was no provision for compensation under railway rules. I discussed the matter with senior officers and later apologised to the affected families. On 24 July, you announced in this very House that Rs. 2 lakh compensation would be given, including in cases where 18 children had lost their lives. The irony, however, is that even the bus driver, who was responsible for the entire tragedy, also received Rs. 2 lakh. Such a situation has arisen that I could not even go home during a four-day break, because people there kept asking me, “Ten of our family members died, all from our area, what are you doing for them?” I have already written to the Hon. Minister regarding this matter. Therefore, I would request that a specific clause be added to clarify whether compensation shall be given in cases of unmanned level crossings, and if not, then this rule should apply uniformly to all, without exception.

Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to urge the Hon. Minister to kindly consider providing compensation in a tragic case that occurred at Gobarhi Rajghat, where ten people lost their lives at an unmanned railway crossing. The entire family was travelling to attend a wedding, and the whole family perished in that accident. I

sincerely request the Hon. Minister to consider compensation for them. Further, Sir, there is another issue faced in my region concerning the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). In my constituency, at a place called Sheetalpur Dhala, eleven panchayats have been connected through a PMGSY road. However, an unmanned crossing has been created there, and more than two thousand vehicles pass daily through that crossing. I had raised this matter earlier with Shri Jairam Ramesh as well. I urge that under no circumstances should PMGSY roads be allowed to intersect a railway crossing without proper safety arrangements. If they do, the existing 25-foot bridge construction rule under PMGSY should mandatorily include the provision of a manned crossing at such points. Otherwise, the fault partly lies with us. When we build PMGSY roads crossing railway lines and later blame only the victims, are we ourselves not equally responsible? Therefore, I humbly request that under your Railway Vision 2020, which envisions the elimination of all unmanned level crossings, concrete steps be taken to ensure that this commitment is fulfilled. The UPA Government was known for its inaction and negligence in this regard; at least we should move forward and demonstrate that our

Government can eliminate all unmanned crossings across the country.

Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would also make a humble appeal that when a person dies in such an accident, the case should be viewed liberally. Often, such incidents occur when the person is alone; if his relatives were present, the tragedy might have been avoided. Therefore, these matters must be considered from a humanitarian perspective. The Railways, after all, are a social organisation, and I am confident that the Hon. Minister will give this issue due attention.

With these words, Sir, I extend my wholehearted support to this Bill.

[English]

SHRI MD. BADARUDDOZA KHAN (MURSHIDABAD): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I convey my gratitude to you for allowing me to participate in the debate on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2014. I am happy that the Railway Minister is here and he will take note of our views seriously and do something about it.

I am sorry to say that I do not agree with the theory of multiple claims concerning railway accidents because with the advancement of science and technology, we are using computers and most of the railway systems are linked up with computers. In such a situation, how are multiple claims possible? When we know where the accident has occurred, the number of persons who died, and the number of persons who were injured, then how multiple claims are possible? It is not possible. Therefore, this amendment is not necessary.

Another thing which has to be taken serious note of is that you have inserted clause 124 (b). You have told here that to minimise the compensation due to accident, a new section has been inserted as 124 (b) in which it is written that no compensation shall be payable if the passenger dies or suffers injuries due to his own carelessness and negligence. I want to quote a line from that Bill. It may be

established and proved by the passenger or on his behalf that he has taken reasonable care and precaution to avoid occurrence of such incident. It is not possible. I can tell you why it is not possible. If clauses are inserted in this manner, I am sure no passenger or his family will get the compensation in any case especially in case of accidental falling from the passenger train.

Let us discuss why such cases occur. In the last five years, most of the Railway Ministers used railway for their political purposes and cheap publicity. They do not care about the safety and security. Till now, there are thousands of unmanned level crossings. There are so many level crossings in National Highway 34 but no under bridges are there. Who is responsible for this? In these death traps, so many lives have been lost. It is a matter of great regret.

In the 67th year of our Independence, we are discussing about such matters. Some Railway Minister in recent past declared that the Railways will have hospitals, schools, modern markets etc. Many foundation stones are also laid for this purpose. Nothing is done. What has been done to prevent the life of the poor and middle class passengers? If you go to Murshidabad and Sealdah station in peak hours, you will see many local trains running with over-loaded passengers. You will see some passengers are hanging in door-steps

like bats. There is no other substitute to those passengers to go to their destination in time. No sufficient trains are there. No sufficient train lines are also there to avoid such incidents. What will you say? Is it their carelessness? Is it their negligence? It is remarkable that in some festival seasons throughout India, almost all trains become over-crowded and the passengers become susceptible to serious physical injury and even to death due to stampede. What will you say in this case?

The Bill does not cover up all these possibilities of accidental injuries and death of the genuine passengers. I do not know why the Government is in a hurry to pass the Bill in this session.

Most of the speakers raised about amendments. They raised their objections. So, I request the hon. Railway Minister that if he is really serious to get this Bill be passed, I suggest that the Bill may be examined by the Standing Committee when it will be formed and valued opinion of the stakeholders may be obtained and then placed before this House. It will be better for all of us.

SHRI MEKAPATI RAJA MOHAN REDDY (NELLORE):

Thank you Sir for giving me an opportunity. This amendment is brought to plug the loopholes in false claims. Hence, I welcome the Bill. At the same time, genuine people should not be deprived of their claims. The Railways should give top priority for the safety of the passengers. Nowadays, we are hearing about the train accidents very frequently. A large number of accidents are occurring due to the negligence of human beings. There is a requirement to make track renewals at many places. The Railways should ensure that nobody take inflammable materials.

In the year 2012, a train, namely, Tamil Nadu Express met with an accident at Nellore. It is my constituency headquarters. Two bogies were burned and a large number of people died. Hence, the Railways should take care of this to prevent such incidents. Many of the train accidents are occurring at unmanned level crossings. Recently, in Medak District, in the State of Telangana, a school bus was hit by a passenger train where more than 20 innocent children were killed. Hence, Railways should take care of this. Wherever it is required, they should build over bridges or under passes, otherwise such incidents will go on occurring.

Nowadays, Railways are going in for 100 per cent FDI. So, it can complete the pending projects. Hon. Railway Minister said in his Budget speech that about Rs. 5 lakh crore are required to complete the pending projects. Now with the FDI, he can complete all the pending projects.

Nowadays, train collisions are also happening. There is a device, we understand, to avoid such train collisions also. They should take care of this to avoid such train collisions. Since the Government is now welcoming the FDI, they can definitely take care of passenger safety, complete all the pending projects and make the railway passengers' travel safe and comfortable. I support this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE (AKOLA): Thank you, Hon. Madam Speaker. I rise to express my support for this Amendment. Since the NDA Government, under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi Ji, came to power and Shri Sadananda Gowda Ji became the Railway Minister, there has been a remarkable change in the functioning of the Railways. During the ten years of the UPA Government, had the same system continued, the entire railway network would have come to a standstill. However, the Hon. Minister of Railways has taken several important and bold decisions. Some of these decisions, such as the 14 percent increase in passenger fares, might appear unpopular, yet they were absolutely essential to keep the Railways running. Sir, I come from a farmer's family. Farmers always feed their bullocks first, the ones who work in their fields, and only then do they eat themselves. The condition of the Railways had become extremely poor over the past ten years, and now sincere efforts are being made to revive it. I extend my full support to this Amendment. However, I would like to draw attention to the amended Sections 123 and 124 (B), which state that if a passenger dies due to his own negligence, compensation shall not be granted. This provision is appropriate in principle, but when we travel by train, the information

systems at stations are often inaccurate. On several occasions, announcements are made saying “The train is about to arrive”, even though the train is already standing at the platform. Similarly, announcements like “The train is preparing to depart” or “The train is ready to leave” are made even as the train begins to move. In such cases, if an accident occurs, I believe the Railway Administration is at fault. At many places, it is observed that those who cross the railway tracks are not ordinary passengers but railway employees or porters themselves. As my colleague Shri Satpathy Ji rightly mentioned, automatic door closers should be installed in trains, and all unmanned railway crossings must be removed to prevent such accidents.

Secondly, I believe that more important than providing compensation after an accident is to ensure that accidents do not occur at all. If we can develop such a mechanism, it would be far better both for the Railways and for all our passengers. In my opinion, one of the main reasons for the increase in accidents is the poor financial condition of the Railways. For this, provisions such as PPP and FDI are being made. However, for many years now, we have all recognised that the Railways are our lifeline, they sustain and connect our nation.

In the past ten years, several new railway lines and gauge conversion projects have been sanctioned, yet perhaps only one or two of them have been completed. One extremely important project, sanctioned fifty years ago, was the metre gauge line from Hyderabad to Jaipur, passing through Hyderabad, Nanded, Akola, Khandwa, Indore, which falls under the Parliamentary Constituency of Hon. Madam Speaker; and then to Ajmer and Jaipur, covering about 1,450 kilometres. Nearly the entire line was once functional. I used to travel from Akola to Jaipur in 22 hours, but today it takes 35 to 40 hours to reach Jaipur. This is a great injustice that a facility which existed 30 or 40 years ago no longer exists today. I firmly believe that whenever gauge conversion work is undertaken, it must begin from one end and continue seamlessly to the other until completion. In our region, gauge conversion work has been completed from Jaipur to Ratlam, and from Hyderabad to Akola. However, the sections from Akola to Khandwa, Khandwa to Indore, and Indore to Ratlam were sanctioned six years ago, that is, in 2008-2009. Out of these, about 60 percent of the work from Ratlam to Khandwa has been completed, but the Akola–Khandwa section has not even been started yet. This project was not merely demanded by us; it was also recommended by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Its

Rate of Return (ROR) is 25 percent, which is exceptionally high, perhaps unmatched anywhere else in the country. Despite this, the project has remained pending for six long years. We have strong expectations from the Government, particularly from our Railway Minister, Shri Sadananda Gowda Ji. If this line were completed, the distance between Jaipur and Secunderabad, as well as Jaipur and Bengaluru, the Parliamentary Constituency of the Hon. Railway Minister would be reduced by 200 kilometres. Therefore, these projects must be completed at the earliest, because when such important projects are accomplished, they not only improve efficiency but also significantly reduce the number of accidents.

I once again thank you, Hon. Chairperson, for giving me the opportunity to speak.

SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV (BADAUN): Hon. Chairperson, India is a welfare state. However, after reading this Amendment Bill, one cannot feel that it represents the spirit of a welfare state. This Bill appears either to have been influenced by bureaucrats or that the Hon. Minister has, somewhere along the way, deviated from the country's core welfare philosophy. Therefore, my first humble request to you is that instead of treating the passage of this Bill as a matter of prestige, it should be referred to the Standing Committee once again, so that the necessary corrections and improvements may be made. It is not only I who raise these objections, Members from your own Party have also expressed serious concerns regarding certain provisions of this Amendment Bill. ... (*Interruptions*) I fail to understand, Hon. Minister, through you, Hon. Chairperson, what kind of economic crisis has compelled such an Amendment. ... (*Interruptions*) I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, what great financial burden has this compensation placed upon the Railways? You have introduced several measures, including FDI, to strengthen the Railways financially, and we have extended our support to those efforts. However, if you attempt to make the Railways financially prosperous by depriving the poor of their due

compensation or justice, then we will oppose it both inside and outside this House.

16.00 hrs.

Hon. Minister, I fail to understand how a mere Rs. 160 crore allocation could have become such an unbearable burden. Many of my colleagues have already spoken on this matter, and as my Party's time is limited, I shall not repeat all their points. But I would like to ask, how can a deceased person prove whether the incident occurred due to his own negligence or due to the fault of the Railways? How will you determine this? For the investigation of such cases, the expenditure you will incur on lawyers, commissions, and enquiry committees will far exceed the amount of compensation payable to the victims, and that compensation is, in fact, deserved. Therefore, I earnestly urge you to withdraw this Amendment Bill. If you do not withdraw it, then I would like to ask: have you ensured that all level crossings are manned or that all general compartments are adequate in number? When you issue general tickets, you impose no limits, any number of passengers standing in queue can purchase them. Subsequently, the police assist in pushing those passengers into the general coaches, which are packed like bundles of hay. If, during such overcrowded travel, passengers lose their lives, then it must be clear that the negligence lies not with the passengers, but with the Railway Administration. These are not wealthy people, they belong

to poor families. No rich man comes to seek compensation from you. Those who do are all poor, helpless families. How can such families prove that the accident that claimed their loved one's life occurred due to the Railway's negligence or not due to their own fault?

Hon. Minister, you had shown dreams of better days. The poor passengers would not have imagined that Sadananda Gowda ji would bring such a bill, would bring such good days that even after his death his family members would have to tell whose negligence it was. Reading the basic spirit of this bill makes one feel that a person is losing his life for compensation. ... (*Interruptions*) If I am saying something wrong then you all can tell me. ... (*Interruptions*) Will any man give up his life for compensation?

Hon. Minister Sir, it is not too late yet. This is the collective sentiment of the entire House. Respecting this sentiment, I request you to withdraw this Bill and refer it to the Standing Committee. After receiving its recommendations, you may reintroduce the Bill in this House. We can then discuss the proposed suggestions in detail. But this anti-poor Bill should be withdrawn that is our humble appeal to you. If you do not withdraw it, then let me remind you that the poor citizens of this country are watching through television and

the media what those who promised “Achhe Din” (Good days) are doing today. As Shri Jaiswal Ji rightly pointed out, your great leader and revered figure Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Ji also died in a similar railway accident. Even after forming the NDA Government four times, you could not ascertain the cause of his death. Then tell me, how will a common man prove that the negligence was not his but the Railway Administration’s? Therefore, Hon. Minister Sir, without prolonging the matter, I once again earnestly request you to withdraw this Bill and send it to the Standing Committee. Once the Committee’s recommendations are received, the Bill may again be discussed in this House. There is no such urgency that compels its passage today. If you impose a small tax anywhere, you can easily recover Rs. 160 crore. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has already demonstrated this for the welfare of farmers. When a farmer dies in any accident, the burden of proof does not fall upon him or his family, nor is there any formal enquiry. Moreover, if a farmer dies in an accident, the Uttar Pradesh Government grants Rs. 5 lakh as compensation, even though its treasury is far smaller than yours. Therefore, as custodians of a much greater national treasury, please do not inflict injustice upon the poor. That is our sincere and heartfelt appeal to you.

SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR (NALANDA): Hon. Chairperson, I express my sincere thanks to you for allowing me to speak on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2014. It is evident that all Hon. Members of this House share a common opinion on the matter. Therefore, it is certainly necessary that this Bill be withdrawn.

16.04 hrs.

(Shri Kanakalla Narayana Rao *in the Chair*)

Sir, this Bill is anti-poor. The passengers who die in railway accidents or lose their limbs will have to suffer even more under its provisions. I come from the Nalanda Parliamentary Constituency, and I would like to narrate a tragic incident from my constituency. At Aungaridham Halt, two years ago, five women travelling by auto-rickshaw to observe the Chhath ritual lost their lives as there was no level crossing gate at that spot, and their vehicle was struck by a train.

Even today, their families have not received any compensation. These women belonged to Jehanabad and were going to Aungaridham as devotees for the Chhath festival. Hon. Minister, whether the accident occurred due to the negligence of the railway driver or due to the absence of a proper gate, the fault certainly did

not lie with those women who were on a religious journey. I firmly believe that such poor and helpless families will be deprived of justice because of this Bill. Therefore, I too join my colleagues, including Shri Dharmendra Yadav Ji and several other Members of this august House, in urging that there was no pressing need to bring this Bill in such haste. It would be far more appropriate if the Bill were withdrawn and referred to the Standing Committee for detailed examination and necessary recommendations before being brought again to this House for consideration.

Hon. Chairperson, with regard to the other Bill, I would also like to make a few observations. You have mentioned that there are cases where certain individuals make multiple claims for compensation. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how many such people actually exist who have claimed and received compensation twice from the Railways. I believe it would be appropriate to compile such figures, as other Hon. Members of this House would also wish to know them. Secondly, I would like to submit that instead of introducing such a provision in the Bill, the Railway Administration should improve its own mechanism so that no person is able to receive compensation twice. If anyone has received double compensation, it must be due to the negligence or collusion of the officials concerned.

Therefore, I strongly believe that this Bill should be withdrawn. I conclude by expressing my full support to the points raised by Shri Dharmendra Yadav Ji, whose concerns truly reflect the sentiments of this House.

[English]

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I rise to oppose the Bill strongly. I urge upon the hon. Minister and the NDA Government to kindly review the Bill. I demand that the Bill be sent to the Select Committee for further perusal, detailed discussion and elaborate examination, and even adducing evidence.

If we are going to pass this Bill in this House, then it will be the first anti-people and anti-poor legislation of the 16th Lok Sabha. This is a draconian legislation as far as the common poor people are concerned. So, I would like to urge upon the Treasury Benches or the hon. Members on the other side, to kindly see the definition of ‘falling from train’, or ‘accidental falling’. That itself would go to show that if this Bill becomes an Act of Parliament, then definitely not even a single passenger who falls from the train would get any compensation. For whom the legislation is being enacted? So, my humble submission to the hon. Minister and the Government is that it should be sent to the Select Committee so as to have a detailed discussion on this issue.

Coming to the amendments – I will confine myself to the amendment only – I would say that the very intention of the Bill is to

repeal the beneficial legislation which is existing. With the existing provision, some benefits were being accrued to the common poor passengers who were traveling in the ordinary trains. It is seen from the definition and the intention of the legislation that the 'no person who dies in an accidental falling from a train while trying to entrain or detrain the train or while standing near the door is entitled to get compensation.' It is said that if there is an accidental falling while either entrain or detrain or standing near the door, he is not entitled to get the compensation. This is the intention of the Bill.

Clause 124 (a) is to be amended. Also, the definition under section 123 is to be amended. What is the intention of the legislation? I will come to the definition which is there in Clause 123 (a) (a). I would like to draw the attention of the entire House to this definition. If you split the definition, it is like this. In Clause 123 (a) (a), 'accidental falling' means accidental falling of any passenger from a train carrying passengers, but does not include a passenger falling from a train while standing near the door.

Sir, kindly apply your wisdom. It says that if a passenger who is standing near the door falls, it will not come within the definition of passenger which in turn means not even a single passenger is going to get the benefit or the compensation. How could this definition be

accepted? We are all very sure that a person who is safely sitting in the seat will never fall. A person who falls from the train, definitely he has to fall from the door. He cannot fall from the window. How could this definition be accepted?

So, I would request the Minister and the Government to look into this aspect. As far as the definition of 'accidental falling' is concerned, it says that a passenger falling from the train while standing near the door will not be a passenger. It means it is denying the right of compensation to the common man and the poor people who travel in the train by standing near the door. They are not the reserved passengers. They are poor passengers. Who is responsible for this?

I would like to ask whose responsibility it is to see that no passenger is on the door. It is the responsibility and duty of the Railway Protection Force. It is the duty of the Train Ticket Examiner to see that none of the passengers is standing near the door so that no accident happens while the train is moving. So, it is the moral as well as legal and tortious responsibility of the Railways to see that if anyone meets with an accident by falling from the train, it is the legal and tortious liability of the Railway authorities to compensate

them. You are going to deny them compensation by means of this amendment to this definition.

Secondly, how many tickets are you going to give? A train which is having a carrying capacity of say, 500 seats, you are issuing 1500 tickets and you are allowing people to enter into the train. So after paying the train fare, they are entering into the train. The safety and security of the passengers are to be looked into by the authorities, especially the employer. It is the responsibility of the employer. Unfortunately, you are issuing tickets and you are taking money from them but you are not giving seats to them. There are only 80 seats in a compartment but you are giving tickets for 140 passengers. With the result, they are forced to stand near the door. Suppose anything happens and they fall from the train, they are not entitled for the compensation because they were standing near the door. So, definitely, this has to be looked into.

I would also like to cite a Supreme Court verdict on this issue. In *Union of India verses Prabhakaran Vijaya Kumar and others* case reported in 2008 (2) KLT 700, the Division Bench of the hon. Supreme Court held:

“If we adopt a restrictive meaning to the expression ‘accidental falling of a passenger from a train carrying

passengers’ in Section 123(c) of the Railways Act, we will be depriving a large number of Railway passengers from getting compensation in Railway accidents. ”

Further the Supreme Court says:

“It is well known that in our country there are crores of people who travel by Railway trains since everybody cannot afford travelling by air or in a private car. By giving a restrictive and narrow meaning to the expression, we will be depriving a large number of victims of train accidents (particularly poor and middle class people) from getting compensation under the Railways Act. Hence, in our opinion, the expression ‘accidental falling of a passenger from a train carrying passengers’ includes accidents when a *bona fide* passenger, *i. e.* , a passenger travelling with a valid ticket or pass is trying to enter into a Railway train and falls down during the process. In other words, a purposive, and not literal, interpretation should be given to the expression. The hon. Supreme Court is, thus, of the opinion that in interpreting a statute like Railways Act, the

object of the Act and for the benefit of the person for whom the Act was made should be preferred. ”

This is the observation made by the hon. Supreme Court in its 2008 judgement. So, even the Supreme Court is endorsing the views which we have expressed. Therefore, this definition of passenger cannot be accepted.

Third point which I would like to highlight before this House is regarding the burden of proof which has already been mentioned.

Sir, I come next to the question of burden of proof. It is mentioned in Section 124(b). I am not going to read the entire Section. I am only reading the proviso alone. It states, ‘provided that for the purpose of this clause it may be established and proved by the passenger or on his behalf that he had taken reasonable care and precaution to avoid occurrence of such an incident.’ It is a criminal liability and responsibility that the Government proposes to put on the passenger. It proposes to make changes in the criminal jurisprudence as well. The hon. Law Minister is not present in the House. I would like to seek his opinion also in this respect. The burden of proof lies on the shoulders of the poor ordinary passenger. It is for him or her to prove that he had taken abundant care and

caution to travel in the train and that it was beyond his or her control that the accident had taken place. If such a case is proved before the court or the Tribunal, then only he or she is entitled to the compensation. This is a draconic legislation; it is a disastrous legislation. The Government may argue that this Bill was brought by the UPA Government, but whether it is NDA or UPA, whatever it may be, this is anti-poor and anti-people. Therefore, I once again, humbly urge upon the Government either to withdraw this Bill, or to send it to a Select Committee for further discussion.

With these words, I conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA (TONK-SAWAI MADHOPUR): Hon. Chairperson, I am deeply grateful to you for granting me the opportunity to speak on this Railways (Amendment) Bill. Several Hon. Members have expressed their views on the matter, and I have listened to them attentively. The Railways is a department that functions for the convenience of the people, operating trains across long distances, including through forests and open areas. As far as railway accidents are concerned, I believe that every Railway Minister would desire that the poor should receive the maximum possible compensation; no one would wish to reduce it. However, the real issue is that when trains pass through forests and open stretches at speeds of 100–120 kilometres per hour, it is inevitable that if something comes before the train, it cannot be saved, not even the driver could avoid such an accident.

I would like to submit before the Hon. Railway Minister that in cases of railway accidents, the victims should be granted as much compensation as possible. The most significant point is that many passengers travel by sitting on the roofs of train coaches. It has often been observed that such individuals meet with accidents due to electrocution from overhead wires or collisions with trees. When

such unfortunate incidents occur, it is immediately said that the Railway Minister is responsible, even though the passengers themselves were travelling in a hazardous manner and even taking pleasure in doing so. Therefore, it must be recognised that at times the responsibility for accidents lies with the public as well. Many accidents occur as a result of people's own negligence. Unless there is active cooperation from the citizens, it will not be possible to completely prevent railway accidents.

Hon. Chairperson, I am grateful for the opportunity to express my views on this Railway Budget and the Bill introduced to bring about a transformation in the state and direction of the Indian Railways, the heartbeat of our nation. On behalf of the voters of India, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Hon. Railway Minister for the manner in which he has made provisions in the Railway Budget to give priority to the completion of long-pending projects. These measures will breathe new life into the Indian Railways, which had been moving towards decline.

While once again expressing my gratitude to the Hon. Railway Minister, I would also like to say that a positive environment for transformation has emerged across the country. The voters of

Rajasthan, with great enthusiasm and commitment, have discharged their democratic duty by voting overwhelmingly in favour of Hon. Narendra Modi Ji. Just as some of our colleagues affectionately refer to the Chief Minister of their State as 'Amma' during their speeches, we too in Rajasthan have a strong 'Amma' who led us to victory in all 25 Parliamentary Constituencies of the State and contributed significantly to the formation of this Government. Therefore, I would respectfully urge the Hon. Railway Minister to kindly pay due attention to the needs and aspirations of our 'Amma' and also to those of the people of our State.

Hon. Chairperson, Rajasthan is a State vast in area, and its people cannot manage without train services. Our State is economically weak, and due to poverty, people are unable to travel conveniently. Therefore, I earnestly request that since Rajasthan has extended full support and cooperation to you, you kindly give due attention to our State's needs.

The Hon. Railway Minister and the Hon. Minister of State for Railways make a pair akin to Lord Ram and Lakshman. We wish that every Government should have such dedicated and capable Ministers who possess the determination and ability to deliver

outstanding results. I express my heartfelt gratitude to both of them. Our Hon. Railway Minister is cheerful and always wears a pleasant smile. Although Shri Manoj Sinha Ji appears to be senior, the pair functions admirably well together. I sincerely pray that may the Almighty protect them from all ill-will.

In a few months' time, the next Railway Budget will be presented. We have full faith that the Hon. Railway Minister will do justice to the State of Rajasthan on that occasion. I thank him profoundly for approving the doubling of the Jaipur–Sawai Madhopur–Kota railway line in his very first Budget and for also sanctioning electrification from Sawai Madhopur to Jaipur. For this, I convey my deepest gratitude. No other Railway Minister could have prepared such an effective Budget within just sixty days. During the previous five years of Government, neither the officials, nor the Ministers, nor even the Prime Minister possessed the ability to take decisive action. The fare hike introduced now, though modest, ought to have been done five years ago. Unfortunately, the previous Government wasted five precious years merely passing time, without showing any seriousness towards meaningful work.

Hon. Chairperson, Sawai Madhopur is a renowned tourist destination. I would like to take all the Hon. Members of this august House to Sawai Madhopur at my own expense. In our region, when a tigress roars, the tigers gather as though in a panchayat, and the entire town comes out to witness that magnificent sight. I would request the Hon. Railway Minister to kindly visit Sawai Madhopur once and, keeping in view the large number of tourists visiting from within the country and abroad, consider establishing a food court at the Sawai Madhopur Railway Station for their convenience.

I had recently met the Hon. Minister and even showed him a newspaper cutting. Effigies of mine have even been burnt over this issue. The previous Government had made public announcements that Tonk–Sawai Madhopur had been sanctioned a railway line, claiming that the budget had already been approved. During the election campaign, I too mentioned that since the railway line had already been sanctioned, allocation of funds might come through in the next Budget. However, when the Budget was finally presented, it brought great disappointment to us. In Tonk, effigies were burnt in protest, with people asking, “You had said during the election that the railway line was approved, now where has that railway line gone?” Hon. Minister, I have a single request, please arrange for a

new railway line to be laid at Tonk so that my reputation may be preserved and effigies of me are not burnt.

Hon. Chairperson, Gangapur is situated in the district of Sawai Madhopur, where in the year 1986, steam engines were manufactured. The site comprises approximately 250 bighas of land, around 1,500 quarters, and a large workshop shed. The previous Government had sanctioned a workshop at Bhilwara, but in view of the Land Acquisition Bill, acquisition of fresh land in the present scenario is virtually impossible. I would, therefore, urge the Hon. Railway Minister to make use of the existing infrastructure. There is no need for any substantial financial investment, as all essential facilities, like 250 bighas of land, 1500 residential quarters, and a large workshop shed are already in place. If the proposed workshop could be shifted from Bhilwara to Gangapur, operations could commence immediately.

The Dholpur–Gangapur railway line project has been pending for the last 17 years. I request that this project be completed at the earliest. In my Parliamentary Constituency, there is the Vanasthali Vidyapeeth located at Tonk, where nearly 12,000 girl students study, including many from the Hon. Minister's own region and from

various States across India. There is a superfast train on that route. These students are compelled to change trains three times to reach their destinations. In the current circumstances, when the safety of girl students travelling from college to home is a matter of grave concern, I would request the Hon. Minister to ensure that this superfast train halts at Vanasthali Vidyapeeth Station so that, for instance, a student from Karnataka or Madras (Chennai) may conveniently travel directly to her home.

Further, with reference to the Bullet Train, I would like to state that Jaipur is a world-renowned city attracting tourists from across the globe. Given the heavy traffic on National Highway-8, it is only fitting that a Bullet Train service be extended to Jaipur. Without such a facility, Jaipur remains incomplete. I conclude by thanking the Hon. Minister for his initiatives and extend my full support to this Bill, with the hope that in the forthcoming Budget, the Hon. Railway Minister will also give due consideration to Rajasthan.

SHRI SHER SINGH GHUBAYA (FEROZEPUR): Hon. Chairperson, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would like to thank the Hon. Railway Minister for presenting a Railway Budget under which, for the first time, three trains have been sanctioned for Punjab. This Bill pertains to the payment of compensation in cases where any passenger suffers injury, loses life, or faces any other kind of loss due to a railway accident. If such accident victims are denied compensation, it would indeed be an injustice to them. Therefore, proper arrangements must exist to ensure that every person who suffers physical harm receives due compensation. In this Amendment Bill, it should be ensured that the procedure for granting compensation is simplified so that accident victims can obtain relief easily. At present, there are numerous formalities that poor or ordinary people find difficult to complete, due to which they face great hardship in receiving compensation. The compensation process must, therefore, be simplified.

I would further request Hon. Minister Gowda to take special note of the issue of unmanned railway crossings. Ideally, such unmanned crossings should not exist anywhere in the country. However, where there are forests or sparsely populated areas,

unmanned crossings may be feasible. But in densely populated areas, such as those in Punjab, even within cities there are unmanned crossings. Many times, accidents involving school buses, trucks, and lorries have occurred at such crossings, yet the Railways have not provided any compensation to the victims. Compensation must be paid in such cases, and in all populated areas, there should be manned supervision at crossings to prevent accidents.

I would like to make a request to the Hon. Minister. Just as the DMU trains have been introduced, many of these cover a distance of two hundred or three hundred kilometres, yet there is no provision of toilets in them. Whether it be a patient, a woman or an ordinary person, it is very difficult to travel for such a long duration without using a toilet. There should be a provision of toilets in DMU trains. From Firozpur–Fazilka to Jalandhar, a DMU train is operational. I have personally spoken to the DRM Sir that the train carries a large number of passengers, but it has only two coaches. Those two coaches carry passengers equal to that of four coaches. I urge that at least four coaches should be attached to this train so that people may get some relief.

Sir, before the partition of India and Pakistan, Fazilka was one of the wool markets of Asia. Washing machines for cleaning trains were installed at Fazilka, and trains used to halt there for washing. However, the previous Government has closed down that station.

I would like to request the Hon. Minister that just as all the districts in Punjab exist today, we wish that every district be connected to the capital through the railways, particularly by the Shatabdi trains, so that every district may feel that they have the provision of trains, be it Intercity, Express or Shatabdi. At present, two trains operate between Chandigarh and Firozpur, and though the Hon. Minister has assured us that instead of starting from Chandigarh to Firozpur, one will now run from Fazilka, the situation with regard to the Shatabdi remains that neither Firozpur nor Fazilka has been provided with a Shatabdi service. Only yesterday, in Fazilka, a Struggle Committee has undertaken a hunger strike demanding that the district be connected to the national capital by at least one Intercity, Shatabdi or Express train. Fazilka district lies near the border, and such a train would enable people to travel easily to Delhi and to important religious places such as Haridwar, Nanded Sahib, Shri Harmandir Sahib, and Vyasa, among others.

Those places which were once small villages or towns have now grown into large cities, yet no Express train halts there, nor do any major trains stop. Therefore, at all stations where the population exceeds 10,000 or 20,000, there should be a provision for all trains to halt.

Our Firozpur is one of the oldest and largest divisions. A major army cantonment is located there, yet there is no train or Shatabdi train connecting it directly to Delhi. Hence, we request that the number of ticket counters there be increased so that army personnel and common citizens do not face any inconvenience in obtaining tickets. I am confident that the Government will surely address these small but significant difficulties. With these words, I conclude my speech and thank you for allowing me to speak.

[English]

ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill.

Sir, I am also having some reservations about the definition of “falling from a train”. Some of the hon. Members have dealt with that matter very effectively. So, I do not want to make any comments on that issue. Hence, I will confine my speech only to Section 124B which is the proposed amendment to the Railways Act.

On a reading of this Section, I find there are so many ambiguities in this Section. May I read from this? It says:

“When in the course of working a railway, an incident of accidental falling occurs, then, whether or not there has been any wrongful act, neglect or default on the part of the railway administration such as would entitle a passenger who has been injured or the dependent of a passenger who has been killed....”

May I pause for a moment on the “dependent of a passenger?” It will create a lot of problems, when this matter go before the Tribunal for adjudication. As we all know, the dependents do not include all

the legal heirs. All the legal heirs are not dependents of a person. If a person dies and nobody is dependent on him because of many reasons, other legal reasons, there will not be any compensation for the legal heirs also. So, it is a matter to be cleared. We will have to have some further discussion on that issue. That is my opinion.

Then, there is a further issue. I continue from where I left. It says:

“...the dependent of a passenger who has been killed to maintain an action and recover damages in respect thereof, the railway administration shall, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, for the time being in force, be liable to pay compensation to such extent as may be prescribed and to that extent only....”

Here, the power is given to the subordinate legislation for fixing the quantum of compensation. In my opinion, it is not fair on our part to give this power to the subordinate legislation for fixing the price of the lives of the persons, the hapless persons who met with an accident, who lost their lives. There should be some mechanism in this enactment itself to fix the quantum of compensation.

The other aspect is that the discretion given to the Tribunal has been taken away by this amendment. It is for the Executive to fix the quantum of compensation, and it is not at all fair or good for the interests of the poor persons who met with accident and lost their lives in the accident.

The other aspect has already been dealt by many hon. Members and that is the proviso to section 124(b). It is a draconian enactment because the burden or the onus of proof is on the persons who met with an accident or the poor victims, who would again be burdened to prove that the entire accident has occurred not because of his fault and it is the fault of the Railways. How can it be proved? That matter has been dealt with here. So, I don't want to explain further.

On a total reading of the proposed amendment, I am of the opinion that this piece of legislation will be against the people; against the poor people; and against the railway commuters and it would have a very drastic impact in the future legislations also. If this enactment is passed, without any amendments, it would set a bad record or precedent and it would create problems. Hence, I urge upon the Government to refer the matter to the Subject Committee; and after having a detailed discussion there, we can proceed further.

With these words, I conclude.

[Translation]

DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA (MUMBAI NORTH EAST): Hon. Chairperson, first of all, I would like to request the Hon. Railway Minister to kindly assist me and provide a train for those who have not yet been allotted houses.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI (DHARWAD): You provide them houses, and he will give the train.

DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA: Hon. Chairperson, the Amendment Bill that has been introduced today, I believe, has been under discussion by the Railway Administration for almost a year. The two main issues it addresses are duplicate claims and incidents of passengers falling from coaches. Through you, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister towards Mumbai. In the last six months, four such incidents have occurred there. While describing these, I would like to make an earnest appeal to the Hon. Minister, as these are directly related to the present Amendment. My colleague, Shri Shrikant Shinde, mentioned the case of Monika More, a 16-year-old girl from my Ghatkopar area who was on her way to college when she fell into the gap between the platform and the train, resulting in the loss of both her arms. What was Monika More's fault? She lost both her arms, we provided her with a pair of

electronic arms. Yesterday, she came to tie a rakhi on my wrist with those same electronic arms. In my constituency itself, at Kurla Station, Tanveer Shaikh, a 31-year-old young man, similarly fell into the gap between the platform and the train and lost both his legs. Our organisation is providing him with both prosthetic legs. A double load incident occurred at Titwala and Ambivli in Thane district, where a train derailed. This incident took place in March 2014. During the derailment, Dhaval was thrown onto the tracks, fell down, and was run over by an approaching train, resulting in his death.

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to mention the fourth incident. In Thane district, there is a tunnel through which a train was passing at high speed. Due to a sudden jerk, four passengers fell and died on the spot. All of them were innocent citizens. I would like to appeal to the Hon. Minister, must one prove that he was innocent, that he is innocent? Hon. Minister, you may pass this Bill, but while implementing it, the Railway Administration should provide some clarification to the Claims Tribunal.

I would like to give another example. The objective of the Bill is indeed good. Those who indulge in malpractices must be stopped, and they should certainly be stopped. Duplicate claims have become

a business. [English] Your intention is certainly good. [Translation] We support this Bill because duplicate and bogus claims must be curbed. However, with regard to genuine and innocent passengers, while concluding the discussion on this Bill, I request that the Administration be directed to take all necessary precautions to ensure their protection. That is my humble submission.

[English]

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI (KARUR): He is a Ruling Party Member. He is raising an important point. When the Bill has some lacuna, the Minister should please try to rectify that.

[Translation]

DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA: Hon. Chairperson, I support this Bill. The intention of the Bill is good, and we are to pass it unanimously. This Bill has been brought to prevent theft and malpractices, and it is indeed a very good Bill. However, apart from the Bill, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to a few important matters. My discussion today is on this occasion of the Bill, though the examples I have cited are not directly related to it. At present, platforms No. 14 and 15 have been constructed in Delhi. In connection with this Bill, I would like to mention that the cases that come before the Railway Claims Tribunal need attention. You have

assumed charge as the Railway Minister only a month or two ago, and there is no fault of yours in this regard. But for the purpose of discussion, I would like to request you, our senior colleague, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, is also present here, that for the past one and a half years, there has been no Member (Judicial) in the Mumbai Railway Claims Tribunal. As a result, there is a backlog of four thousand cases. [English] This has nothing to do with any of us, [Translation] and I would like to clarify that it is not directly related to this Bill. Yet, on this occasion, I earnestly request that the appointment of a Member (Judicial) in the Railway Claims Tribunal be made at the earliest.

Finally, I would like to draw your kind attention to a small but significant matter which has come to my notice and which I have also discussed with Railway officials. You have mentioned this in the Railway Budget, and [English you have taken an initiative [Translation] in this regard. We want to focus more on prevention so that such unfortunate incidents do not occur. You have made an excellent beginning in the Railway Budget by announcing that the doors of trains will have an automatic locking system. I had appreciated this move even at that time. [English] Please start with Mumbai Suburban Railways or other suburban railways such as

Chennai Suburban Railways. [Translation] Once the automatic door-locking system is introduced in suburban trains, there will be no need for discussions on such Bills in the future.

Sir, finally, I would like to conclude by making one more submission. Wherever accidents have occurred, the Railway Safety Commission conducts inquiries. Therefore, an accountability clause should be incorporated in such cases. What usually happens is that the Safety Commission conducts the inquiry, submits its report to the Railways, and then that report remains buried for months or even years.

In the month of March, an accident occurred near Mumbai. The Railway Safety Commission visited the site, and the report has since been submitted, but it is lying unattended. Who is responsible for the Ambivli train accident? No efforts were made to save the passengers. Although the incident took place in March, I would request you to bring necessary improvements in this regard as well. In conclusion, while supporting the Bill, I would like to reiterate that the intention of the Bill is indeed very good. Bogus and duplicate claims must be eliminated. You have already taken an initiative towards prevention in the Railway Budget, please accelerate its

implementation. At the same time, for genuine passengers, their claims, compensation, relief, and rehabilitation must be processed expeditiously. For instance, if a person's hand is crushed in an accident and the claim remains pending for four years, [English] that means that compensation you will be giving for medical treatment. [Translation] It is not your fault, but from the perspective of improvement, if these matters can be resolved within a year, it will indeed be commendable.

SHRI SHAILESH KUMAR (BHAGALPUR): Hon. Chairperson, with regard to the Railway (Amendment) Bill, 2014, which has been introduced today, I would like to state clearly that if both the policy and the intention of the Government remain transparent, then this is certainly an excellent Bill and is in the interest of the public. However, since neither the policy nor the intention appears to be clear, it cannot be considered entirely appropriate. Moreover, it is not proper that this Bill has been brought before the House today without being referred to the Standing Committee. A detailed discussion should have taken place there before bringing it to this House. The Bill has been introduced to prevent multiple claims for a single loss or damage. It is undoubtedly a good Bill and should certainly have been brought forward. Yet, it also warrants a comprehensive debate. The second matter concerns unforeseen incidents. From time to time, such incidents continue to occur across the country. The discussions on this issue revolve around four main points. First, suicide or attempted suicide, self-inflicted injury, one's own criminal act, and one's own negligence or carelessness.

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to state that when a poor person meets with an accident while travelling by train due to the fault of the Railways, the inquiry report prepared by the Railway

Department, and I have witnessed this with my own eyes, usually concludes that the person himself was at fault or that the accident occurred due to his own negligence. I have personally seen such a case. I was travelling by train when I noticed that one of the steps of the coach was broken. While a passenger was trying to board, he slipped and fell between the train and the platform, sustaining severe injuries to his hands, legs and head. Yet, till today, his claim has not been settled anywhere. Therefore, though this Bill and its amendments have certainly been brought in the interest of the common people, the greatest shortcoming lies in the fact that it requires a detailed debate. It should have been referred to the Standing Committee, where all the railway experts could have been called for an in-depth discussion before it was brought to this House. Nevertheless, since the Bill has now been introduced and the Hon. Minister is present here, I would like to urge that it should not happen that whenever an accident occurs, the department simply declares that the person committed or attempted suicide by coming in front of the train. There is a pressing need for careful consideration and a well-thought-out mechanism to prevent such conclusions. Many poor people fall victim to accidents while merely walking along or boarding the train. They lack the strength or means

to fight their case with the Railways or to afford medical treatment. Such poor citizens get trapped in these circumstances and, abandoning their pursuit of claims, end up struggling merely to get themselves treated.

Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to submit that this Amendment Bill should be referred to the Standing Committee, where it should be thoroughly discussed in detail, and only thereafter should it be brought before the House for consideration. Since the discussion today pertains to the Railway Amendment, I would also like to raise a few issues related to our region. From time to time, accidents keep occurring there. For instance, a little ahead of Bhagalpur, there is a place called Lailakh. Bhagalpur is well known on the map of India, and just beyond it lies Lailakh Station. There is an urgent need for a level crossing there. The most significant point is that a bridge has already been constructed there at a cost of nearly Rs. 25–30 crore, but as it lacks a level crossing, the bridge has become completely useless today. The bridge stands there, but it serves no purpose.

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to request the Hon. Minister that a level crossing should be constructed there so that the frequent

accidents occurring in that area may come to an end and the people may get relief. There are many other matters as well, which I shall discuss personally with the Hon. Minister. There is a pressing need for establishing a Divisional Railway Office at Bhagalpur. In the year 2008, the then Railway Minister had announced its establishment and had directed that an O.S.D. and other officers be appointed for carrying out an examination of the proposal. Bhagalpur is an excellent location, and the city is also known as the Silk City. In the State of Bihar, Bhagalpur holds a distinct identity. Therefore, through you, Hon. Chairperson, I would like to urge the Hon. Minister to take the initiative for setting up a Divisional Railway Office at Bhagalpur so that Bhagalpur, known as the Silk City, may be linked to a new chapter of progress. We wish to see Bhagalpur shine on the map of India as a prosperous and golden city.

Hon. Chairperson, I sincerely thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. With these words, I conclude my submission.

[English]

SHRI A. P. JITHENDER REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR): Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the Railways (Amendment) Bill. [Translation] I would like to remind the Hon. Minister about the incident that occurred 10–15 days ago at Menda. We visited the spot of the incident ourselves. The local people said that [English] this is due to negligence of the driver. [Translation] The driver was talking on his mobile phone, and the train went ahead, causing the accident. However, when we visited the location, we saw that there was a building constructed nearby. Because of that building, the driver could not see the approaching train. [English] This building has totally obstructed the sight of the driver and as a result many accidents took place. [Translation] There is one thing I have never understood. Since my childhood, I have often heard people talking only about the Railway Budget, so I used to sit in front of the television. When I was a child, I listened to the Railway Budget on the radio. Whenever I watch the Railway Budget, one song always comes to my mind –

“Dil ke tukde hazar hue, ek yahan gira, ek vahan gira.”

(The heart broke into a thousand pieces, one fell here, one fell there.)

Where it falls, who finds it, what happens to it, nothing is understood. No one can see where this piece falls within the 28 states of our country, but sometimes I have seen that this piece is sometimes more visible in West Bengal, sometimes in Bihar and now it will be seen in Gujarat. Hon. Minister, you are the Railway Minister now, so this time at least put a big piece of your heart in Karnataka. The train that passes over Mehboob Nagar will have at least a double track. I want to tell you only one thing that the distance from Hyderabad to Mehboob Nagar is only 100 kilometers. Many people travel up and down from Mehboob Nagar to Hyderabad in the morning and evening for their employment. Till today it is single track and that train runs on single track. You know that when lakhs of people board and deboard the train, accidents keep happening. No one knows who pushed whom, who fell where. The compensation you are trying to give in this, [English] you have to identify the person, [Translation] is an impossible thing. Therefore, I request you to reconsider the amendments to this bill and after thorough investigation, bring amendments in it and pass this bill.

[English]

SHRI PREM DAS RAI (SIKKIM): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for allowing me to participate in this debate.

Sir, I just want to draw your attention, and, through you, to the attention of the hon. Minister that I have received the news that a young boy from Sikkim, who was allegedly beaten and thrown out of the train on August 5th, near Patna, Bihar. This 22-year old boy, Sonam Gurung, boarded the train at New Jalpaiguri and was moving to Mumbai where he was working in some restaurant.

Now, Sir, this brings us to the central issue as to how do we take this issue in this amendment, and where does it really fall. Does it fall under suicide attempt? Is it self-inflicted injury? Is his own criminal act or his own carelessness or negligence? In the process, how do we actually define, and where this particular accident lie. The entire dream of this young boy, the dream of his parents and the dream of Sikkim has been extinguished in this manner.

Now, the hon. Minister has brought this Amendment Bill. I think, the question that we need to really ask ourselves is, where really the problem is. Is the problem of identification? Is the problem of saying that this particular accident happened and how do we really prove it?

One of the hon. Members, Shri Somaiah, had brought this important issue that in the modernization process, we can reduce the chances of accident. That is number one. Secondly, in the question and in the quest for somebody like this Sonam and his family to actually come and ensure that the claim settlement happens, and if he has to go through a torturous process, then it will never happen. We know that because there are thousands and thousands of people, and lakhs of such cases that are pending. So, where can we modernize and how can we modernize? Perhaps, the answer to this question lies in Information Technology. Will, by sitting in Gangtok, this particular family be able to produce the documents, produce all the papers, through the IT mechanism and, therefore, not have to run from pillar to post and spend much more money in doing so?

I think, the settlement process can also be much more humane. Therefore, I would like to conclude by saying one thing. The thinking behind this, the intention behind this, is perhaps perfect. But, I think, in the process of its rollout there will be many issues that will need to be addressed.

With these words, I thank the Chair for allowing me to speak on this very important issue. Sikkim does not have railways. Sikkim

only has travellers. Sikkim exports people to places like Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai.

17.00 hrs.

But I think what we need to really understand is how the people in Sikkim and in remote locations also get the benefit that his particular Bill intends to do.

With these few words, I conclude.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I heard with attention so many Members from every side. They have given some valuable suggestions. A few confusions and concerns have also been expressed during the debate.

There are observations made by various Tribunals for the last many years. Here, I would like to place on record the judgment of a Tribunal, which clearly says:

“It is, in our opinion, not only unfair and unjust but an attempt to adversely affect the system and the law framed for the benefit of the genuine and needy dependents of the deceased or injured in an untoward incident. The provisions about an untoward incident have been incorporated to facilitate the dependents and genuine claimants to have their grievances redressed by the Tribunal and not for persons who approach the Tribunal with ulterior motive, unfair design and with the intention to obtain compensation based on false, fabricated and afterthought facts and evidence.”

17.01 hrs. (Dr. M. Thambidurai *in the Chair*)

This is one such observation. I have got several observations with me. But I do not want to take all these things. The purpose of bringing this Amendment is to see the entire Railways; and where the unfair things are being done, I should put an end to it. For that, there are certain areas where we need to have some adjustments. Individuals also should show their responsibilities towards a big organization like the Railways.

About the judgement, a copy of the judgement is sent to the Chairman, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways, New Delhi, to be ensured by him that necessary and effective steps are being taken in this regard. Several observations of this type made by various Tribunals are also with me.

Sir, I do not want to politicize any argument at this juncture. My friends sitting on the other side, who were in the Treasury Benches in the last 10 years, have themselves mooted this Amendment... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): That is not the point... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Please hear me...
(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, just because it was mooted by them, it does not mean that there should not be a debate or there should not be any discussion... (*Interruptions*) It needs to be debated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, please have order in the House.
... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Please hear me. About the Amendment, the Cabinet approval was taken as early as in January, 2014. This Government has given a clear approval for the whole Amendment. And now, while sitting on the other side, they say that they are totally against this Amendment. This should not be the case... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the hon. Minister speak.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: We have the right to express our own view. This is a law making process... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: There is one more thing which I would like to bring it to your notice. Many confusions have been expressed in this debate and I want to clarify them.

They were talking about unmanned level-crossings and some other incidents that took place in the railways. But practically, this Amendment pertains to the passengers traveling in the trains alone. These Sections and Amendments will apply only for those persons who are traveling in the trains. Practically, unmanned level-crossing accidents are governed by the Motor Vehicles Act and not under this Act. That should be clarified. Then, there would be an end to all these sorts of arguments.

Sir, I would like to place on record that the definition only tries to make the 'accidental falling' more clear.

That is the only intention of this amendment. The Railways will be responsible for the passengers falling while the train is in the station but the Railways cannot be held responsible for the passengers falling from a train when it is moving. This should be understood by all my friends. The whole intention of this amendment is that whenever a passenger standing near the door falls down when the train moves, automatically, that cannot be taken into consideration. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Order please.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: When the train is not in the station, these provisions will not apply. So, they should understand

that when the train is on the move or when the train is not in the station, these provisions will not apply for that. That should be understood by my friends. Hence, the definition only tries to avoid the claims of death when the train is moving. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Let him finish. Afterwards, I will allow.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: So, my friends have misunderstood the definition of this one. That is one thing. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: My friends have expressed great concern. ... (*Interruptions*) I will come to that. If negligence is on the part of the RPF, what are the Railways doing? My friend, Mr. Venugopal raised another issue. He said that a rape occurred on a train and the RPF police was asked to be held responsible. If the fault is on the part of the RPF, certainly, the Railways will be held responsible. So, we cannot run away from that responsibility. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat. Let him finish. Let the Minister speak.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI D. V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Please sit down. I will come to you.

Of course, I do concede the concerns of the friends from Mumbai that there are accidents in the suburban areas of Mumbai. Of course, raising the height of the platform is certainly a thing that I should take care of and I have already begun my move. I have said it in my Budget speech that raising of the height of the platforms and automatic door experiment will be taken care of. Certainly, they will be taken care of. In future, we are going to do it to avoid all these incidents. ... (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to one more thing. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: With regard to the Judicial Members, of course, in Mumbai the Judicial Member Vice-Chairman's post is vacant. DPC has already been held and a suitable person will be selected. After receipt of the IB report, it will be sent to the ACC to consider their request and certainly, immediately a Judicial Member will be given to Mumbai as early as possible. Already, the papers are on the move. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARVIND SAWANT: I have a point of order. ...
(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: There is no point of order. The Minister will continue.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Sir, I would like to draw your attention with regard to their concerns and say that I do concede that there are certain small, small confusions during drawing the rolls and the matter will be looked into within the purview of the Act that is placed before this House. ...
(Interruptions) Sir, what is this? I cannot answer him if they are not willing to listen to this. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat.

... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: First, you take your seat. I am standing on my legs. The Chair is on its legs please. Please listen to me. Let the Minister finish his reply. Then, I will allow one Member from each party to seek a clarification. Please wait.

... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I told you just now to take your seat. Let the Minister finish his speech.

*(Interruptions) ...**

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Hon. Chairman, Sir, I said that the whole purpose of the amendment is to curtail false claims and multiplicity of claims across the country. Of course, even today the right of a passenger, who can file his claim application in three places, has not been taken away. At any of these places – where he purchased a ticket, where the accident took place or at the destination – he is at liberty to file a claim. Of course, they have got a little bit confusion with regard to Section 124 B, wherein they say with whom the burden of proof lies. Usually, in legal jurisprudence the burden of proof lies on the part of the claimant, who goes to the court to seek some relief.

Similarly, here also, in the event of attempting suicide, self-inflicting injury or one's own criminal act, the medical reports reveal all the facts. That right will be available to each and every passenger. Passengers' rights are not denied. No problem is caused to individuals or commuters. So, the amendment is brought to see that such malpractices in Railways Claims Tribunal should not be done. This amendment is in the larger interest of the Railways. Therefore, I pray that the amendments may be adopted.

* Not recorded

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Kharge ji, please seek your clarification.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I have asked that only one person from each party can seek clarification. When your leader is speaking, let him represent.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: He represents your interest. He was a Minister also.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Hon. Chairperson, whenever a Bill is brought repeatedly, the Members sitting on that side always say that it was done by those who were in power earlier and that is why they are bringing it now. If everything that we had done earlier is what you are now bringing forward, then there is no need for you to do anything new; you may simply keep implementing what has already been done, and there would be no need for any discussion at all. Secondly, as per the rules, when a Bill is introduced and formulated, before it is enacted, we all together,

through deliberation, send it either to the Standing Committee or to a Select Committee. You are all aware that the Standing Committee and the Joint Select Committee were constituted precisely for this purpose. While the discussion was going on, I observed for the first time that our BJP leader, Dr. Kirit Somaiya, seemed a bit confused, as he was saying whether he should speak in favour or against. He was wondering what would happen if he went to Mumbai and what would happen if he stayed here, this was his dilemma while speaking. Now, since everyone's opinion has been expressed and the discussion has taken place, and since there are a few defects in the Bill, what is the problem in referring it to the Standing Committee? [English] Everybody agrees on it. When all parties - Shivsena, AIADMK, TRS, Congress – are insisting for it, you are not going to lose anything. It is not an urgent matter. It will take hardly 15 days or one month. The rule says that within three months any Bill should come before the House after Select Committee's scrutiny. So, I request you not to always refer to averment. We never said that it should not be sent to the Standing Committee; we never said that it should not be sent to the Select Committee. We never said that it should not be scrutinized. We might have drafted it. It might have

been approved by the Cabinet. But, if anything is found wrong, the House has every right to rectify it.

Therefore, I request the Government, through you, that it should be referred to the Standing Committee and you scrutinise and bring it to the House as early as possible. Then, the House will take a decision on it.

SHRI ARVIND SAWANT: Sir, our Members from Mumbai have already said that local trains should be excluded from the purview of this Bill. I am not going to describe a lot of things because Shri Somaiya has said elaborately about them. The very reason for this is that if the Bill is passed right now, the platform gap is not going to be filled tomorrow. If an accident takes place, who is going to take the responsibility for this?

Secondly, in the definition, the word used is 'dependent' and not the 'legal heirs' of the passenger. The word 'dependent' means anybody. In that case, they will say that somebody is not dependent. What does a dependent mean? When you are earning, when your wife is working, when your child is working, when your child is 25 years old, they will say that he is not dependent on you. In such a case, the family will not be compensated. Who is going to take that responsibility? That is to be clarified.

Please also look at the aspect of density of passengers. In one square metre, four passengers are supposed to travel. Dr. Shrikant Shinde has said about it elaborately. Today in our local trains, 16 passengers are traveling in one square metre. You are talking about the DMUs and you are talking of closing of the doors. Is it possible? How lakhs or millions of passengers are going to travel in Mumbai?

Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to come and stand on the platform some day and see how people are travelling. People are putting their lives at stake and travelling in the local trains. The hon. Minister has brought a Bill which is common for everybody. Therefore, we request him to exclude the local suburban trains from the purview of the Bill so that their rights are protected.

We have accepted his point about the judiciary. I thank him for mentioning that a judicial representative will be there on the tribunal. There again, I will tell him that even in the case of an accident, the compensation is not there, for people who go in coma or suffer head injury, for years together. Very few people come to the Claims Tribunal.

These things are to be clarified. If the Bill comes into existence tomorrow, what will happen to the passengers who meet with an accident? I would like to have an answer to that.

SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE (SREERAMPUR): Sir, by this definition, the scope of the Act is being narrowed down. I tell you that when a train is having 14 or 16 compartments – I take an example of the Coalfield Express or Black Diamond Express – even on Howrah Station, people stand beyond the station. Take the case of small stations and see where a train stands. Take the case of

Rajdhani Express when it stands at Dhanbad or Gaya stations. The compartments are beyond the station. In that case, this definition would narrow down the scope of the Act, this definition would curtail the scope of the Act. I do not know whether the Railway Minister has ever travelled in a train or not and whether he is having the experience of travelling in a train. He may come and see any passenger train like Howrah-Sealdah EMU local. The train is so crowded that people are hanging.

Then, my learned friend has mentioned about the definition of 'dependent' used in the Bill. I adopt that. Kindly send it to the Select Committee or the Standing Committee. Otherwise, it will be curtailing the rights of the people.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, I am not against the intention of the Bill, but at the same time, the deliberations and the suggestions that have come from the Treasury Benches and also from the Opposition side conclude that there are many lacunae in the Bill and they have to be corrected. There is no doubt that if the Bill goes to the Rajya Sabha, it would be sent to the Standing Committee, but the hon. Minister can take the credit if from the Lok Sabha itself, it is sent to the Standing Committee.

With regard to the clarification, it is said by the Minister that in Kerala, some accidents took place in the trains. One accident took place at Shornur in Kerala.

I want to make it clear that one incident happened from the moving train where a lady was attacked and thrown out of the train. She was raped and she came to a doctor. So, it happened in a moving train. My strong submission is that this Bill has to be sent to the Standing Committee.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, once again, I would like to urge upon the hon. Minister as well as the Government one point. Hon. Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad is also sitting here and I would request him to enlighten this House as to what

would be the fate of the Bill if it is passed by this House insofar as passengers who fall from the train are concerned.

I am not going to repeat the definition. Accidental falling means a passenger who falls from the train only through the door. A person who stands on the door will only fall. A person who is safely seated in his seat never falls. So, the entire definition of 'accidental fall' is absurd. We will support you, and the entire House will support you, but please enlighten the House in respect of the definition of 'accidental fall'. ... (*Interruptions*)

Secondly, the hon. Minister, in his reply has also admitted the fact that there is confusion and that confusion cannot be clarified through rules. He has made a suggestion that all those confusions that are within the piece of legislation can be cleared at the time of making the rules. No, it can never be done because an entirely different scenario will be created. So, please have a re-look into this issue.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Sir, I was keenly hearing the opinion of the Congress Party Leader. The Minister has only mentioned the fact

that this amendment was drafted by the then Government just for information. This is information, and nobody should have any objection to it. ... (*Interruptions*) You might have changed your opinion or you might have realized that it is not a good thing. There is nothing wrong in that also. What I am saying is that if Members from different sides -- our friends from Mumbai were talking about suburban trains, and our friends from West Bengal were mentioning about Kolkata and Howrah stations, etc. -- and if there are apprehensions and if there are some sort of doubts in the minds of people, then there is no problem for us because firstly, it is not an ideological issue; secondly, it is not a question of prestige issue also; and thirdly, we were only keen because the other day I heard the Leader of the Congress Party -- who is an experienced person and also former Railway Minister -- himself saying that this Railway Bill is a simple Bill, so there would not be any problem. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please let him finish.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: This is not to make fun of anybody. My point was that when I heard this, I thought that if it is simple, let the House discuss it; come to a conclusion; and let the

Bill be passed. This was the view of the Government. Now, if people have some apprehensions and if there are some genuine concerns to be addressed, then I would suggest to the Minister that Okay, let the Bill go to the Parliamentary Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Standing Committee can come back on this issue.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

SHRI D. V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Sir, I want to set-right a few things. My friend, Shri Kharge, said that I am politicizing the issue. Even in the preliminary submission, I never said that this was mooted by the Congress Party or the earlier Government. But because later on there were submissions from the other side stating that this was not necessary and that this was unconstitutional, etc. , then I said that practically it was approved by the Cabinet as early as in January 2014. ... (*Interruptions*) I never said it. I do not have any ego problem. When the whole House feels that if certain confusions are there and that it needs to be sent to the Standing Committee, then certainly I do concede to the request of my friends and there is no ego problem as far as I am concerned.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Okay, thank you.

The discussion on this Bill is over. At this stage, it would not be proper to send it to the Committee. There cannot be any discussion on the same Bill twice.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, the normal practice is that once the discussion is completed and the Minister has replied, then the Bill is not referred to the Standing Committee. But going by the general mood of the Members, the House can take a view and the Government is willing to go along with the view of the House. We can refer it to the Standing Committee.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Let the Bill go to the Standing Committee.

17.24 hrs.

GOVERNMENT BILLS-Introduced...Contd.

(iii) National Judicial Appointments Commission Bill, 2014*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD to introduce the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the procedure to be followed by the National Judicial Appointments Commission for recommending persons for appointment as the Chief Justice of India and other Judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices and other Judges of High Courts and for their transfers and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to regulate the procedure to be followed by the National Judicial Appointments Commission for recommending persons for

* Published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 11. 08. 2014

appointment as the Chief Justice of India and other Judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices and other Judges of High Courts and for their transfers and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. ”

The motion was adopted.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: I introduce the Bill.

17. 25 hrs.**(iv) Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-First) Amendment
Bill, 2014*****(Insertion of new articles 124A, 124B and 124C)**

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.”

The motion was adopted.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 11.08.2014.

SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE (SREERAMPUR): Sir, please bring it before the House as early as possible so that we will discuss and pass it.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: It is only introduction of the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Sir, we will consult the Chair and have it listed at the earliest.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: I quite appreciate the sentiments of the senior hon. Member. We will certainly consider it.
... (*Interruptions*)

17.27 hrs

THE APPRENTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2014

[Translation]

**THE MINISTER OF MINES, MINISTER OF STEEL AND
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI
NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR):** Chairperson Sir, I beg to move:

"That a Bill further to amend the Apprentices Act, 1961 be considered."

Hon. Chairperson, there was a pressing need to bring amendments to the Apprentices Act, 1961, as we are all well aware that there is an urgent requirement to enhance skills in our country today. Ever since the formation of the new Government, expectations in this regard have risen across the nation. There were several provisions in the Apprentices Act which created difficulties in this matter. In the present circumstances, the scope of apprenticeship needs to be expanded, the rules simplified, and the curricula revised. Hence, it has become necessary to amend this Act,

and that is why the Government has introduced this Amendment Bill.

Through you, Sir, I would like to appeal to all Members that this Amendment Bill is of great importance from the perspective of the youth, of skill development, and of scaling up the nation's capabilities. The country urgently requires it today. I request all Members to express their positive views on this Bill and to move forward towards its passage. After all Members have expressed their opinions, I shall respond to them. ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Sir, I have one point to make. Before we start the discussion on this Bill, let this Bill also be sent to the Standing Committee.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat. Hon. Members, as you are aware, under the Rules, the Speaker is empowered to decide which Bills should go to the Standing Committees. The practice in this regard has been that almost every Bill, except a few categories of Bills, should go to the Standing Committee. While the hon. Speaker wished to refer some of the important Bills introduced

during the Session to the Standing Committees, she permitted the Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 2014 to be included in today's agenda for consideration and passing, in view of the request of the Minister in-charge for not referring the Bill to the Standing Committee.

Now, the House will take up Half-an-Hour Discussion.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Sir, I have written a letter on 8th August stating that this Bill should be referred to the Standing Committee because this Bill is not important, urgent as also there are a number inconsistencies in that Apprentices (Amendment) Bill. Even when the hon. Minister contacted me, at that time also, I told him that there were a few inconsistencies which should be looked into.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: That is all right, but I have made an observation based on the Speaker's decision. I have informed the House the decision that she has taken.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: If everything is bulldozed like this, then why should there be this Parliament? There should not be

any Parliament. You do not want to discuss and you also do not want to take it to the standing Committee.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman Sir, when we are saying that we are ready for discussion, then you have objection, using such words every time frequently as bulldozing and all. Where is the question of bulldozing? Who is trying to bulldoze?

Sir, in a democracy, it is the House which is supreme. It is the majority who decides the things also. Keeping that in mind, Shri Kharge ji has written a letter to hon. Speaker and also marked a copy to our Minister. We have discussed it among ourselves and we are of the opinion that there is a larger public interest involved in this. That is why, we have brought this Bill. Let the House discuss it and come to a conclusion either way.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: This discussion will continue tomorrow. Now, we will take Half an Hour Discussion. Shri Virendra Singh to speak.

17.31 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Re: Rise in prices of milk

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH (BHADOHI): Hon. Chairperson, it is indeed a matter of great pride that in the Parliament of India, a discussion is taking place on milk, a food bestowed upon us by the divine. Some days ago, a question was raised regarding the increase in the price of milk, which remained incomplete. I believe today's discussion is being held in that very context. This nation is ancient and has a glorious history. The sages of our country have linked milk with the traditions, culture, and civilisation of India. ... *(Interruptions)* Milk is not merely a commodity for trade, it is also deeply connected with the food heritage, culture, and civilisation of this land. ... *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Chairperson, since ancient times, our sages have regarded milk as an excellent form of nourishment. Even today, the majority of our countrymen consume milk and derive strength from it. Milk is among the essential food items of our nation. In recent days,

discussions have been held about the rise in the price of milk. As a farmer, I am concerned that whenever the prices of agricultural produce rise, whether it is grains or other products grown by farmers, an uproar begins in the country. Whenever the prices of farm produce increase, it is immediately termed as inflation.

Hon. Chairperson, I become deeply concerned when the prices of goods manufactured in factories, those that farmers themselves consume, such as cloth, paper, electricity, water, and medicines rise, yet not a word is heard about it. But when the prices of goods produced by farmers increase, an uproar erupts across the country, and people begin to ask why the Government cannot control inflation. I would like to state with great concern that if prices are to be determined, then let this Parliament decide them unanimously, what should be the profit margin over the cost incurred in agriculture, and what should be the profit margin over the cost of items produced in factories. I believe this House can unanimously decide on such matters. Yet I am surprised that whenever the prices of agricultural produce rise, everyone begins lamenting that the prices of milk, wheat, pulses, and vegetables have gone up.

My concern is that the person who toils in the field and produces with the sweat of his brow does not receive the rightful benefit of his labour. A law should be enacted in this august House ensuring that those who cultivate the land through their hard work must receive fair returns for their produce. As far as milk is concerned, our country produces 37 crore litres of milk every day. For a population of 125 crore people, this quantity of 37 crore litres is produced. How much milk is actually consumed? How much milk does a person need? It can be stated with certainty that 37 crore litres of milk cannot suffice for a population of 125 crore. There is a reason behind this shortage. A large number of milch animals are being sent for slaughter. The country exports a considerable amount of meat. We have a shortfall in buffalo milk even today because buffalo meat is in demand in many countries. Buffaloes are being exported from our country for slaughter. This matter must be brought to the attention of the Government, and strict measures should be taken to stop it. As a farmer, I can say this with conviction. Many people do not understand this issue, some because they do not produce milk, some because they are unaware of agricultural realities, and some because they do not appreciate the value of hard work in the fields. But we, who are connected with agriculture, understand it well. Many

Members here are associated with the agricultural sector, and they too are aware of these facts. That is why I say that this is a land of both agriculture and sages. Since Vedic times, our sages have guided us on what kind of cultivation should take place in which regions. In the Vedic era itself, the sages had enlightened us that those who consume cow's and buffalo's milk remain healthy and strong.

Hon. Chairperson, even today there exists immense potential for agriculture in the plains of the Ganga and Yamuna. If you refer to the Planning Commission's report, you will find that the most fertile land in the world lies in the plains of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Ghaghara. This fertile land is capable of producing not only food grains but also a vast quantity of milk. If milk production is enhanced, then with the grains and milk produced in the Ganga–Yamuna plains, we can feed the entire world. This is not merely my personal statement; you can understand this fact clearly by examining the Planning Commission's report.

Hon. Chairperson, I have been a student of Banaras Hindu University. Shri Mahendra Ji, who is seated here and is the Member from Chandauli, was also a student of Banaras Hindu University. Shri Madan Mohan Malaviya Ji used to say: “Grame game

pathashala, vyayamshala grihe grihe”, there should be a school in every village and a gymnasium in every household. It was on this very concept that Banaras Hindu University was established. Who was regarded as a Vice-Chancellor in those days? The one who educated ten thousand students, kept thousands of cows, provided milk to his students, made them strong and healthy, he was the Vice-Chancellor. Today’s Vice-Chancellors are not like that; now, if there is a ruling party, one simply walks around its Members and ends up occupying the Vice-Chancellor’s chair. We, who were students of Banaras Hindu University, used to address our Vice-Chancellor as Guruji. Today, commercialisation has cast a question mark over the entire ethos of our nation. It is commercialisation that has compelled our country towards the export of meat. The people living along the banks of the Ganga and other rivers of our country still take pride in saying that they can sustain their lives by drinking milk. As far as the price of milk is concerned, how does it increase? The prices of milk began to rise after the implementation of the policies of economic liberalisation. Cooperative institutions collapsed, and private companies took control. These companies sell milk to consumers at Rs. 40–50 per litre while purchasing it from farmers at Rs. 20–25 per litre. A law must be enacted to address this disparity.

Our Hon. Agriculture Minister is present here. Whenever the matter of fixing the prices of agricultural produce arises, whether it is raised by Members on this side or that side of the House ... (*Interruptions*)
Hon. Chairperson, this issue deserves an elaborate discussion. I earnestly request that you must listen to it with due seriousness.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: This is half an hour discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: This is a matter concerning milk. When it comes to price determination, it is said that a fair price will be given, or a support price will be provided. I am also a farmer, and even today I have not understood the definition of fair price and support price, what exactly is a fair price and what exactly is a support price. Why not use the term 'profitable' instead, that for agricultural products, whether it is milk, grain, vegetables, or fruits, a profitable price will be provided and a law will be enacted in the House to ensure a profitable price for them ... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You ask the question that you want to ask.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Hon. Chairperson, please hear me. You have the right to ring the bell, but I also have the right to speak ... (*Interruptions*). If you wish, you may remove this from the record, but I must speak ... (*Interruptions*).

Enact a law to ensure a profitable price for it. I believe the entire House can unanimously agree to enact a law to provide a profitable price. When a farmer has to sell milk at Rs. 20 per kilo and buy it back at Rs. 40 per kilo, what kind of system is this in the country, and who will regulate it? Therefore, I can say that the issue of milk exports should be addressed in our country. Neighbouring countries face milk shortages, whether it is China, Pakistan, which was once the largest producer, or Bangladesh. We can increase milk production, export to other countries, and still make milk available to our people, but the main question remains that farmers producing milk must receive a profitable price. Terms like support price and fair price should not be used in the House, this is my earnest request. I reiterate, many of our colleagues are present here, Brijnbhushan ji, Mahendra ji ... (*Interruptions*).

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You have already completed.

Shri Rajeev Satav.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Hon. Chairperson, people say that 'Achche Din' (good days) are not coming, but I want to say that good days are coming for the milk community ... (*Interruptions*). 'Achche Din' are not coming for others. Therefore, I can say that we belong to the milk community ... (*Interruptions*). This is exactly what I would like to say ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAJEEV SATAV (HINGOLI): Chairperson, our senior Member spoke of good days. Building on that, I would like to say that if anywhere in the world the largest number of livestock is found, it is in India. However, the Government has not paid adequate attention to the dairy industry so far ... (*Interruptions*). The rural youth are not moving towards it because the incentives and subsidies from the Government that should be available are not forthcoming. I urge that more than 50 percent of youth employment can come from the dairy industry ... (*Interruptions*). For the youth seeking employment, will banks provide loans, and will the Government

enhance subsidies on them? This is what I want to know from the Government.

SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH (KAISERGANJ):

Hon. Chairperson, Kabirdas said, “Ulti Bani, Barse Kambal Bheege Paani.” The price of water and the price of milk are the same, in fact, the price of water is higher. Those who buy milk get it cheaply, while those who produce milk find it expensive. The Government has admitted this in the Supreme Court. Approximately 70 percent of milk sold in the market is adulterated. A survey reported in The Times of India states that 76 percent of milk in the market is adulterated. Today, we may feel proud of our contribution to milk production, but considering these reports of 70 to 76 percent, imagine the situation if all this adulterated milk were removed from the market. Because of this, adulterated milk, fake paneer, and fake ghee are sold in the market. Today, no one can trust paneer or ghee. The sons of our village farmers are ready to drive rickshaws in cities for Rs. 3,000. Respected Shri Virendra Singh raised the question that our production costs are high, and buying is cheap, will subsidies be provided? The entire House agrees with this point. Therefore, I ask the Minister whether such a subsidy will be given. I would like to state to the Minister that if proper prices, profitable prices, are

provided for milk, the unemployment of village youth can be addressed. Will the Government take any steps in this direction?

SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT (JODHPUR): Hon. Chairperson, I would like to express my gratitude to you for allowing a discussion on this important subject in the House. I also thank Hon. Virendra Singh and other Members who brought this crucial matter for discussion in the House. India is the largest milk-producing country in the world. As of today, our production exceeds 100 million tonnes. If we consider the value of this milk, it exceeds the combined value of total wheat or rice production in the country. The current demand for milk in the country is rising rapidly, with projections indicating that by 2022, our demand will increase from 100 million tonnes to 180 million tonnes. This presents a concerning scenario, as over the next 15 years, milk production will need to increase by more than five million tonnes per year. This is an issue of great significance because, while global milk prices are falling, prices in our country are rising. The Government has not provided the level of support that this industry, or livestock farmers, require. Adequate loan facilities, protection for fodder production in the cooperative sector, production of oilcake and animal feed, and proper implementation of animal insurance schemes are not being

ensured. As a result, milk shortages in the country are likely to increase significantly. Furthermore, the rising prices are not benefiting the farmers or livestock owners as they should, which exacerbates the situation. Therefore, I urge the Government to take serious note of this issue and ensure appropriate measures are implemented.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (PATLIPUTRA): Hon. Chairperson, I would like to express my gratitude to you for giving me an opportunity to raise a question during the discussion on this important subject.

SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH: We were a bit concerned that only Rajputs were speaking, but we are very glad that a Yadav is also speaking. We welcome you.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Hon. Chairperson, it is my privilege to say that I am the son of a milk seller. Selling milk has been my family's traditional occupation, and even today, milk is sold in my household. The pain and suffering of a farmer, as expressed by Hon. Virendra Singh, are well understood by those who sell milk, perhaps even more deeply.

As the Hon. Member rightly mentioned, we have the capacity for milk production, and we are indeed producing milk. It was once said that rivers of milk flowed in Denmark, but now, rivers of milk flow in India. However, milk producers are not receiving fair prices. There is a growing sense of despair among cattle rearers, and many are giving up milk selling as a profession. The prices of fodder, grain, and labour are increasing continuously. Hon. Chairperson, you too may come from a farming family and would have observed how cattle rearers wake up early in the morning, labour hard till 11 or 12 noon, and then sell milk, but what is the price they receive for that milk? My friend has rightly said so, and I share this pain here. I come from a family of milk sellers. Crores of people are engaged in this occupation and sustain their livelihood through it. If you look at the cities, you will find that cattle rearers come from villages and live under the open sky. They suffer police harassment, yet they provide us with nectar in the form of milk. The prices of cows and buffaloes are increasing, but has the price of milk increased proportionately? Bottled water is sold at a higher price, liquor prices are rising, but the price of milk, which makes us strong, has not increased.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You may ask a question. Please put a question. What do you want to ask?

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seats.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seats. This is Half-an-Hour discussion. The hon. Member has already explained everything. Four other hon. Members are allowed to put further questions. They have already put their questions.

Now, the hon. Minister has to reply.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: That is all. You put your question. What do you want?

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Okay, you put your question now. What is the question?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what measures are being taken for cattle rearers to curb the declining interest in this occupation. Furthermore, since they are not getting a fair price for milk, what steps is the Government taking to provide them protection and support? This is the only question I would like to ask.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: That is why, we have taken up the Half-an-Hour discussion.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Nothing will go on record, except what the hon. Minister says.

(*Interruptions*) ... *

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Minister, please start your reply and address the Chair.

... (*Interruptions*)

* Not recorded

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): Hon. Chairperson, the information on three main points arising out of the reply to Question No. 383 dated 5 August was provided by Hon. Member Virendra Ji. In addition, several Hon. Members have elaborated on many related matters. I would like to inform Hon. Virendra Ji and the other Members who have expressed their views that the discussion has centred around three important issues. The first issue pertains to the decline in the number of cattle and the decrease in milk production. I would like to clarify that India has been the leading milk-producing country in the world since before 1998. Hon. Virendra Ji himself was a Member of the Lok Sabha during the Government led by Hon. Atal Ji. There has been a consistent increase in milk production in India. Last year, the total milk production stood at 137.97 million tonnes. There has also been no decline in the number of milch animals. The estimated number of milch animals increased from 7.98 crore in 2010–11 to 8.31 crore in 2012–13. To elaborate by category: in 2010–11, the number of exotic cows was 1 crore 18 lakh, indigenous cows numbered 3 crore 9 lakh, and buffaloes 3 crore 71 lakh, bringing the total to 7 crore 78 lakh milch animals in the country. At present, the

number of exotic cows stands at 1 crore 26 lakh, indigenous cows at 3 crore 19 lakh, and buffaloes at 3 crore 86 lakh, making a total of 8 crore 31 lakh milch animals. Compared to the year 2010–11, we now have 1 crore 31 lakh more milch animals. Similarly, there was a discussion on per capita availability of milk. Milk is one such sector where our growth graph has been continuously rising since 1950–51. From March 1950 to February 1951, milk production was 17 million tonnes, and per capita availability was 120 grams. In the year 2003–04, milk production was 88 million tonnes, and per capita availability was 225 grams per person. In 2011–12, milk production reached 127.9 million tonnes, and per capita availability was 290 grams per person. In 2013–14, total milk production stood at 137.97 million tonnes, and per capita availability increased to 305 grams. We are witnessing growth in this sector. However, it is true that in regions once known as “rivers of milk,” the pace of progress is not sufficient, and I concur with that observation. ... (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Chairperson, the second issue pertains to the determination of milk prices. I would like to inform the House that nearly 52 percent of the total milk produced in the country is consumed by farmers themselves within their villages. More than 50 percent of the total milk produced is used for domestic consumption. Around 10

percent of the total production is supplied to urban consumers, mainly through cooperative institutions such as Sudha, Amul, and Mother Dairy. The price at which milk is purchased from farmers for Indian consumers is not determined by the Government of India. It falls under the cooperative sector. The cooperatives and unions based on the Amul model determine these prices. Under this model, every farmer associated with the cooperative is a stakeholder in the profits, and nearly 80 paise out of every rupee from milk sales goes directly to the farmer. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that whenever there is an increase in milk prices, the primary reason behind it is the cost incurred by farmers in milk production. For instance, between May 2013 and May 2014, milk prices increased three to four times. During this period, prices for consumers rose by 14.50 percent, while the farmers' income increased by 17.88 percent. This means that the rise in market prices of milk through cooperative societies corresponds to the increased cost of production borne by the farmers.

18.00 hrs.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Members, it is now 6 o'clock. If the House agrees, then we can extend the time of House till the reply of the hon. Minister and Zero Hour is over.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Sir, yes.

[Translation]

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: Hon. Chairperson, the purchasing price increases more than the consumer price increase. Cooperative institutions decide the price, it is necessary for everyone to accept the same price. But the private dairy, because at present we produce 52 percent ourselves, 10 percent is also from cooperative institutions, hence it makes a total of 62 percent and the remaining, which are private dairies, are not at the fixed rate will be buying. The biggest problem is in eastern Uttar Pradesh, where cooperative milk production institutions have not developed and expanded. In Bihar, which is Western Bihar, ... (*Interruptions*) Of course, 52 percent of the production is their own, 10 percent comes from cooperative organizations and on the basis of the price that is fixed, ten percent is bought by private dairies. Apart from this, 28 percent procure takes

place in unorganized sectors. In unorganized sectors, i. e. people of your villages take it to the market or people like Shri Ramkripal ji procure milk and take it to the market. At what price do they procure now? The price of procurement should be what the cooperative organization procure.

Dairy, along with other agricultural and allied activities, is an integral part of this sector. However, as we all know, this subject falls under the jurisdiction of the States. Nevertheless, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries under the Government of India provides technical and financial assistance to the States. It is our duty to extend such financial and technical support to enhance milk production and productivity of livestock. The increase in milk production naturally has a positive impact on the market. The Ministry also provides assistance to dairy farmers in this regard.

Since the issue of assistance has been raised, I would like to elaborate upon it. The Ministry not only helps farmers in reaching organised markets to sell their milk at reasonable prices but also extends assistance to Government institutions for milk processing and marketing. To enhance milk production in the country, the following departmental schemes are being implemented during the

Twelfth Five-Year Plan, which will contribute to stabilising milk prices. This is a programme of the Government of India. The first among them is the National Bovine and Dairy Development Programme, for which a provision of Rs. 1,800 crore has been made under the Twelfth Plan. It is known to all that about 17 percent of the cows in our country are of foreign breeds, while 83 percent are indigenous breeds. Under this scheme, we are spending substantial amounts to enhance the productivity of these animals. We shall not be parsimonious in allocating funds for increasing the milk yield of the 17 percent foreign-breed cows, but we are equally committed to improving the breeding and productivity of the 83 percent indigenous cows. For this purpose, the Government has launched a new mission named the National Gokul Mission, with an allocation of Rs. 500 crore specifically for the improvement of indigenous breeds and the enhancement of milk production. Similarly, under the National Dairy Plan, a provision of Rs. 2,242 crore has been made. The third scheme is the Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme, with a budgetary provision of Rs. 1,200 crore. Furthermore, I would like to inform the House that although milk production in the country is increasing, the pace of growth is not as rapid as it should be. It may surprise you to know that in many countries there

exists a National Breeding Centre that functions as an umbrella institution, overseeing all subordinate centres. In our country, breeding centres exist, but there is no such umbrella organisation. The concept of a National Breeding Centre has not existed so far. Now, under this Government, we have allocated Rs. 50 crore in the current financial year to establish a National Breeding Centre, and efforts are being made to operationalise it at the earliest.

Sir, a few more points have been raised, and I would like to clarify those. For fodder production, a provision of Rs. 400 crore has been made in the current Five-Year Plan. This also pertains to the States' role in supporting milk production. Under the NPBB (National Programme for Bovine Breeding) and DDP (Dairy Development Programme) Schemes, assistance is provided through State Governments at the block level under the RKVY (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana) for setting up feed plants. Under the Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme, subsidy provisions have been made 25 percent for the general category and 33 percent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As I have already mentioned, this is primarily a State subject, and we implement it through the States. Another issue concerns the flow of funds. It is true that the impact may not always be as substantial as desired, but

it certainly has a positive effect. The dairy sector is one in which our country continues to progress steadily. One of our friends mentioned that the Government has not made any efforts towards increasing milk production. I believe that the Hon. Member sitting on that side. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJEEV SATAV: I did not say that. Please check the record. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: Shri Rajiv ji, you said that the Government has not paid attention to the milk industry. Those were your exact words, that the Government has not paid attention to the milk industry. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Hon. Chairperson, it is not a milk industry. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: Virendra ji, why are you bringing up a third issue now? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: I would like to ask one more thing. Please verify the data on milch animals that your officers have provided. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: Please ask your question after I have completed my speech. My friend mentioned something, I will not take his name now.

[English]

SHRI RAJEEV SATAV: Please do not change my words. I have not used that word. ... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: A friend from the ruling party said that the Government has not paid attention to the milk industry. I agree that the attention given has not been as much as it should have been. If no attention had been given, there would not have been the continuous increase in the dairy sector in the country. Over the past years, irrespective of which party was in power, there has been growth. Whether the speed was 100 km or 40 km, the Government must have given some attention. Even if the Government in power was in opposition at some point, efforts were made, and such efforts should not be ignored. Regarding the current large livestock population and the basic infrastructure for milk production, I agree that the pace of growth could have been higher. That is why I mentioned that 83% of indigenous cows have been somewhat

neglected. The Government is aware that milch animals are the lifeline of this country, and increasing their productivity is a priority.

As far as adulterated or fake milk is concerned, this falls under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). ...

(Interruptions)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Minister, you please address the Chair.

[Translation]

SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH: This matter comes under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). I will address it, but it is not directly under the purview of our Ministry. I agree with the sentiment expressed by the members, and the Government also agrees that milk production needs to accelerate. For this reason, the Government has launched the National Gokul Mission, for which a substantial amount of funds has been allocated.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, the House will take up 'Zero Hour'.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (SARAN): Sir, recent newspapers report that ISIS has crossed all limits of cruelty, and the whole world is witnessing, hearing, and reading about it. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a terrorist organization, has established bases in Iraq. Information indicates that people from around the world are joining ISIS, whether within Iraq or Syria. For those who use smartphones or the internet, witnessing the atrocities may be unbearable. The crimes are horrific, people are being killed in brutal ways, with hearts ripped out, and shootings happen in front of children, sometimes 10–20 bullets per person. ISIS's actions in Syria and Iraq have crossed all bounds of cruelty.

However, a bigger concern is that recently in Tamil Nadu, 26 youths were seen celebrating a festival wearing ISIS T-shirts. The Government of India has been informed, because if people in India publicly display ISIS symbols or slogans, it is worrying. Similar reports indicate that around 80 youths from Tamil Nadu have gone to Iraq and Syria to join ISIS. This is not a single case, I am citing

several incidents. For instance, a young engineering student from Mumbai left a letter for his family explaining why he was going and that he would meet them in heaven after death. Likewise, six youths from Kalyan, near Mumbai in Maharashtra, have gone to join ISIS. This pattern is continuing and is growing.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You raise the particular point as to what you want from the Government.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: I am trying to come to the point. I just want to explain the threat that is being posed today by these elements. Recruitment is taking place from India for the ISIS. There are any number of reports about this. Unfortunately the House could not take up this issue. In the last four months, newspapers after newspapers are reporting these things. If there is a blast in Pune, it is being reported. There are people going from Pune to ISIS. There are people from Jammu and Kashmir joining and fighting the battle in Iraq or in Syria. There are people from Bangalore who are doing this. There was an engineering student who was found there.

This particular organisation is spreading on the basis of internet, smart phones, etc. They are asking the people to get involved in this.

This is spreading like fire in India. The children may be going or the youngsters may be going for adventurism. But actually they are waging a war across the world. Recruitment is taking place in very high numbers from India. This will not just affect the world situation but within India, when these youngsters come back, they may get involved in similar things.

My humble request to the Government is, seeing the situation which is existing world over, especially in the Middle East and further down, that it is important for the Government now to ban and decide to ban any activity of the ISIS in India. It is my request to the Government and it should take cognizance of that.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri P. P. Chaudhary may be allowed to associate with the matter raised by Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDULAL SAHU (MAHASAMUND): Hon. Chairperson, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak during Zero Hour. I would like to draw attention to the matter of the bypass in Dhamtari district in my area. This is a long-pending and highly important demand.

Hon. Chairperson, the only National Highway connecting Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur to the remote regions of Bastar passes through the busiest commercial area in the heart of Dhamtari. Consequently, accidents occur almost daily, leading to significant loss of life and property. In the last two months, 9 to 10 people have lost their lives in such incidents, causing deep anger among the people of the area. In fact, local traders' associations, students, and social groups have staged a sit-in protest there for an entire month.

Hon. Chairperson, this bypass is to be constructed on the National Highway, from Sambalpur to Shyamtarai, covering a distance of approximately 12 kilometres. The survey for this project has already been completed and the proposal from the State Government has also been sent to the Union Government.

Through you, I request the Hon. Minister of Road Transport and Highways to ensure that this demand for the bypass is fulfilled at the earliest, and that bypasses are also constructed in Mahasamund and Bagbahara towns.

18.16 hrs.

(Shri Pralhad Joshi *in the Chair*)

SHRI JUGAL KISHORE (JAMMU): Hon. Chairperson, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a very important issue. My Parliamentary Constituency is Jammu, which is the capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The sacred Tawi river flows through the heart of the city. Its development is progressing at a very slow pace. The funds provided for the lake to be constructed there are extremely inadequate and, due to this, the work on the lake has come to a standstill. Likewise, no funds are being released for beautifying both its banks as required. Steps to prevent pollution are also not being implemented. Through you, I urge the Government that, along with the beautification of this river, the construction of the lake should also be expedited, and sufficient funds must be provided. Lakhs of pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi Ji, tourists heading to Kashmir, or those travelling to Poonch and Rajouri all pass through Jammu. Only if the city's beauty is enhanced will visitors choose to stay, thereby generating employment opportunities for the local youth.

Through you, I request that the Government pays attention to this matter and takes the necessary measures to improve the beauty of the Tawi river.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL (MEERUT): Hon. Chairperson, I thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak during Zero Hour. In 1992, the 74th Constitutional Amendment was passed with the aim of decentralising power, conferring constitutional status and rights on local bodies, so that elected representatives could address problems and ensure the development of local bodies in accordance with public aspirations.

For this purpose, 18 subjects were to be transferred to the bodies. These subjects are mentioned in the new Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution. Due to lack of time, I shall not list them here. The intention was for State Governments to accordingly amend the governing rules of their respective bodies.

Sir, when the central-level urban development scheme under JNNURM was formulated, it mandated that various State Governments amend their municipal laws in accordance with the 74th Constitutional Amendment as a precondition for implementation. This was mandatory.

Some State Governments complied. For instance, the Government of Rajasthan enacted the Rajasthan Municipalities Ordinance in 2008 to bring about the necessary changes. However, in Uttar Pradesh, this did not happen, and I submit that this was not accidental but deliberate. The reality is that elected representatives, Chairpersons, and Mayors in the urban local bodies have no effective role. The State Government, through its officials, has usurped and undermined the powers of these elected representatives. The officials, under State Government patronage, exercise arbitrary control over the planning and implementation of programmes. Social audits of such programmes are rendered impossible. In JNNURM, there is extensive corruption, which I have previously raised in this House and urged for a high-level inquiry.

I request, through you, the Government to immediately transfer all 18 subjects under the 74th Constitutional Amendment to local bodies in Uttar Pradesh, to empower local bodies and ensure speedy action on public interest issues, thereby granting the people of Uttar Pradesh their due rights and advancing them towards a better life.

Sir, I thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity to speak.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (PATALIPUTRA): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Through you, I would

like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Water Resources towards Bihar, a state afflicted by floods and droughts, where riverbank erosion continues unabated on one side and drought conditions persist on the other. Out of approximately 534 blocks in Bihar, 127 blocks falling in the Diara or Tal regions (Riverine plain or floodplain regions) are severely affected by erosion and displacement, causing immense suffering to the people.

In my Parliamentary Constituency, Patliputra, the areas of Maner and Danapur Diara along the Ganga river suffer severely from riverbank erosion. Many people have been displaced, and numerous villages have been eroded away. This year too, several villages are being lost, yet no concrete action is being taken by the State Government. The erosion is so severe that the ancestral village of Loknayak Jayaprakash, Sitab Diara, is on the verge of vanishing due to erosion caused by the Sarayu river. Hundreds of villages in East Champaran, West Champaran, and Gopalganj districts suffer from erosion caused by the Gandak river, while from Buxar to Bhagalpur along the Ganga, many villages are similarly affected. Other rivers in Bihar also cause erosion in various areas every year, making this a perennial problem. The people of Bihar seek a permanent solution. The affected regions are inhabited by impoverished communities

who endure displacement every year. The Bihar Government has proven incapable of providing effective relief and rehabilitation. People wander aimlessly, looking towards the Union Government for support. Bihar's water management cannot succeed without the assistance of the Union Government. A special policy must be formulated for water management in Bihar, with adequate funds allocated while keeping future needs in view.

I urge the Hon. Minister of Water Resources to immediately dispatch a central team to Bihar to formulate a special plan for the permanent resolution of riverbank erosion and to initiate fund allocation forthwith. Separate funds must be sanctioned urgently for relief and rehabilitation so that the very destitute people suffering there can be properly assisted. This is my earnest appeal to the Hon. Minister.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Ram Kripal Yadav.

SHRI P. P. CHAUHAN (PANCHMAHAL): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on an important matter during Zero Hour.

Sir, wild boars have become the gravest problem for farmers in our Parliamentary Constituency, Panchmahal district. Due to costly seeds, farmers take loans from moneylenders or private banks to sow. They work hard in the fields all day. Astonishingly, when these farmers keep watch at night to protect their crops, the wild boars attack humans, maiming or even killing them. These wild boars even utter warnings before attacking. The farmers invest in expensive fertilisers and pesticides to prepare their crops, but when the animals destroy the seeds, the farmers drown in debt. Nilgai and wild boars, also called 'Bhund', form herds of hundreds and attack plots of five acres at a time, annihilating the entire crop overnight.

Sir, on the one hand, the farmer's crop is destroyed and on the other, they drown in debt. Struggling with extreme difficulties in life, they are forced to take their own lives. Through this House, I strongly demand that the Union Government formulate a policy to address such problems, including provision of financial assistance. This issue is not limited to Gujarat alone, it affects the entire country where crops are destroyed by various animals in every State.

I request necessary measures to permanently resolve the problems faced by farmers due to wild boars in our Parliamentary Constituency.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Karadi Sanganna Amarappa, your issue pertains to the State Government. Please proceed.

[English]

SHRI KARADI SANGANNA AMARAPPA (KOPPAL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to raise a matter of urgent public importance relating to the need to establish an ESI Hospital in my constituency.

Sir, Koppal is having more than 40 industrial units of steel, sponge iron, pellets, sugar and power plants and is having more than 200 Rice Mills. Those who work in these units are more prone to diseases. Thousands of employees are working here. There is a huge deficit of doctors in our country. Almost every Primary Health Centre and hospital is facing the shortage of doctors which results in disappointment of patients when they go to these hospitals. These poor workers do not have enough money to get proper treatment done and they cannot afford expensive treatment in branded hospitals.

Therefore, I request the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health and Family Welfare to establish an ESI Hospital in Koppal. It will prove to be a boon to thousands of employees working in these 40 industrial units.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shrimati Priyanka Singh Rawat. Your issue also pertains to the State Government.

SHRIMATI PRIYANKA SINGH RAWAT (BARABANKI):
Hon. Chairperson, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would like to make two points concerning education.

My Barabanki Constituency is considerably backward in the field of education. There is no Government college for higher education. Consequently, boys and girls are compelled to seek admission in Lucknow and other districts, imposing significant financial burdens on their families. Due to this disparity, and concerns over the safety of female students, many girls are forced to discontinue their studies halfway. Many organisations have been agitating for the establishment of higher education institutions in the district for a long time, yet, to date, no permanent solution has been found, and this continues to cause widespread resentment among the district's youth.

The second point is that a second shift should be introduced in the Kendriya Vidyalaya. Students are the future and strength of the

nation, and the country will only be strong if these students are empowered through education. Therefore, through this House, I request the Government to kindly establish one Government college and one Government girls' college in my district.

SHRI ARVIND SAWANT (MUMBAI SOUTH): Hon. Chairperson, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this serious issue during Zero Hour.

Sir, you are aware that Mumbai is the financial capital of this country. The city's population exceeds 1.5 crore. Our Government has announced plans to develop one hundred smart cities, which we welcome. However, it must also be recognised that while we talk of building new smart cities, existing older cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Bengaluru are witnessing a growth in slum populations, particularly driven by urbanisation. Mumbai's population of 1.5 crore includes 62 percent, or 9 million people, living in slums. Among these, 25 lakh reside in old buildings, some of which are over a hundred years old. Our Prime Minister, Hon. Narendra Modi ji, promised that every family would have a permanent house. Yet, I have observed that no budgetary provision has been made for this. Recently, the House discussed the Land Ceiling Act and JNNURM. The Government encouraged the State

Government to repeal the Land Ceiling Act as a precondition for receiving assistance under JNNURM, claiming that this would lower housing costs and enable more homes to be built. However, that outcome has not materialised. The decisions taken have increased suffering for the people of Mumbai. All terrorists rely on such slums or extremist elements. You are aware of the attacks Mumbai has endured. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You may state your demand only.

SHRI ARVIND SAWANT: Sir, I shall conclude within a minute.

The slums here are located along the sea coast. Hence, I demand that although the State Government has adopted a cluster development policy, it has merely adopted the policy but not enacted the requisite legislation. Therefore, I would like to draw the attention of my Government and the Hon. Prime Minister that if every family is to be provided a permanent house, then Mumbai must be allocated Rs. 50,000 crore annually for the next five years. A law on cluster development must be enacted, and in coordination with the State Government, Mumbai should assuredly be provided a foundation. I have faith that the Government will undertake this task. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI THANGSO BAITE (OUTER MANIPUR): Thank you, hon. Chairman, Sir. I am very happy to participate in the 'Zero Hour'. I represent Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. I am representing 28 Assembly Constituencies.

Every day in Manipur there are bandhs, blockades, dharnas and different types of agitations going on because the people are dissatisfied due to non-existence of Inner Line Permit System in Manipur, whereas in the neighbouring States this system still exists. That dissatisfaction is expressed by people from time to time.

Secondly, 90 per cent of total geographical area of Manipur is hilly region and is predominantly inhabited by tribals. It is because of that, if Inner Line Permit System is extended to Manipur, then it will ensure protection of tribal people of Manipur too. That demand is Constitutionally valid; it is clearly indicated and inscribed in the Constitution of India under Article 19 (5), sub-clauses (d) and (e).

Once this Inner Line Permit is extended, I think, both valley and tribal people will be happy. It is because, as Manipur borders with foreign countries i. e. Myanmar specially, some influx of immigrants from foreign countries is also imminent.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Place your demand, please.

SHRI THANGSO BAITE: I would like to demand that Inner Line Permit System should be extended to Manipur. I would like to specially draw the attention of the Home Ministry to this demand. Thank you very much.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Dr. Thokchom Meinya is allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri Thangso Baite.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHBHIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA (TONK-SAWAI MADHOPUR): Hon. Chairperson, I wished to speak on a very important issue. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak during Zero Hour. Respected Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad ji is the Law Minister and is not present, I would have liked him to hear this as it concerns him.

Sir, I would like to request the Hon. Prime Minister, that during the elections, the Rajasthan Government and the Bharatiya Janata Party promised 5% reservation for Gurjars in their manifesto. This demand led to a massive movement across the country, during which 72 people were martyred. But the previous Congress Government kept the matter unresolved for five years, uttering falsehoods and procrastinating without giving it a moment's serious thought.

Sir, I am the sole Member of Parliament from Rajasthan belonging to the Gurjar community, so this issue is very important to me personally. Gurjars across the country agitated on the roads. This demand also features in our party's manifesto and our Government's commitments. Therefore, I earnestly request through you that this demand be fulfilled at the earliest so the community does not resort to further agitation and peace prevails in the country.

Sir, what I told the Law Minister, if he were here or listening from his chamber, I request him to ensure this is included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. Many cases were filed across the country against people involved in the movement, including lawyers, doctors, and farmers who had committed no wrong but have since faced pointless court dates and harassment.

Sir, I request through you that these cases be withdrawn as these people have suffered without cause for seven to eight years.

With these words, I thank you and request that my demand be fulfilled as soon as possible.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri P. P Chauhan.

SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT (JODHPUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, the cost of medical facilities is rising worldwide and similarly in India. To provide its employees with medical facilities, the Government of India launched the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) in 1954. Beginning in Delhi, the scheme now operates through 254 allopathic centres and nearly 500 centres of various other systems of medicine across India. In Jaipur, Rajasthan, there are six such centres, and approximately 32 hospitals have been empanelled under this scheme.

Sir, I come from Jodhpur, the gateway to western Rajasthan and the Thar Desert. Currently, four wings of the Central Armed Forces - the BSF, CRPF, CISF and ITBP, are deployed in Jodhpur. Thousands of employees and pensioners of various Union Government departments such as AFRI, CAZRI, CBI, IB, P&T, Income Tax, CPWD, and the Survey of India reside here. However, it is unfortunate that even after 60 years of this scheme's inception, Jodhpur, which is the centre of western Rajasthan, does not have a single CGHS wellness centre.

Because of this, the people here suffer greatly and must travel 350 kilometres to obtain medicines costing merely Rs. 200. Through you, I appeal to the Government to open wellness centres in Jodhpur

soon. Until then, as a temporary arrangement, two centres from Jaipur should be relocated to Jodhpur to provide prompt facilities.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR):

Sir, more often than not we used to come to learn that kidney racket has been going on across the country with impunity. In spite of a slew of legislation, these kinds of kidney racket have not been stopped in our country.

In recent times, we are observing that Kolkata, in West Bengal, has become a hub of kidney market. Kidney donation law differs from State to State. Insofar as West Bengal is concerned, the law that both the donor and the recipient are to be either related or to be from the Same State is being followed. But the law is being violated by cocking a snook to the authorities, and under the glare of the authorities, illegal transaction of kidney market has been going on.

Sir, the gullible people of our country are being duped to sell their kidney, and only the middlemen are garnering more than 80 per cent of the profit from these financial transactions.

In Kolkata, it has been found that 40 per cent of transplant is being done through financial transaction. It is a grave situation. We know that the demand of kidney has been increasing by leaps and bounds, and so far as supply of kidney is concerned, there is a severe constraint. To regulate this matter, the Government has brought

various legislations. But still, these nefarious activities are going on with impunity. That is why, I would like to draw the attention of the Ministry of Health that stringent laws which are very much in existence should be implemented in a manner that is befitting. Furthermore, at least, more and more mechanism should be imposed on the private hospitals because, as is reported, the private hospitals have become the den of the kidney racket.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The hon. Member, Shri P. K. Biju is permitted to associate with the matter raised by Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, I stand to place before this House a very serious situation, that is, spreading of cancer irrespective of States, place and age. It has become a threat not only to the patients but also to the nation as a whole.

In an answer given by the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Health in 2012 in the House, it was mentioned that there were about 28 lakh cancer patients, and in 2012, 6,83,000 deaths were registered due to cancer.

Over one million cases are registered every year.

There are number of reasons which have been cited. The absence of trained Oncologists is the main reason. There are 1,000 trained Oncologists only in India. The ratio of doctors and patients is only one per 2000.

When a person is affected with cancer, he and his family are upset financially, mentally and physically. The main reason is lack of medical facilities. We have a number of excellent centres like the Tata Institute of Mumbai, the Vellore hospital in Chennai, AIIMS in Delhi, RCC in Trivandrum and also in Bengaluru and Manipal. But, at the same time, these hospitals are insufficient to meet the increased demands of cancer patients.

Cancer treatment facilities should be extended to all district hospitals throughout India.

Palliative care centres should be started in all Panchayats. Kerala is a good example for that.

Early detection cancer centres should be started throughout the Panchayats, the Municipalities and the Corporations. If it is done, we could save lakhs of lives.

Now-a-days, even the life saving medicine for cancer is costlier. There should be strict restrictions on the price of cancer medicine, and it should be cheaper and made available in all places.

There should be a comprehensive health plan to combat cancer, and such treatment should be made free especially for the people who become the victims.

The Prime Minister's National Relief Fund is really a relief but, at the same time, the norms prescribed create much hardship and difficulties. In the case of cancer and other major diseases, there should be relaxation in the norms. Due to the emergency nature of the disease, the patients may not be able to submit the documents before the operation takes place. Such cases are not considered now-a-days. So, irrespective of the submissions of the documents, it should be considered and accounted.

A multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment is essential and this has to be made available in all cancer centres. The services of a trained surgeon and a clinical oncologist are needed to plan a most appropriate treatment.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Karunakaranji, taking into account, the seriousness of the issue, I have given you enough time. Please conclude now.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: I am just concluding.

Radiotherapy services are still the mainstay of treatment. It is not possible for the patients to travel for a long distance to take these facilities.

An essential drugs list has to be prepared for cancer chemotherapy and chemotherapy services should be available in all centres.

Considering the gravity of the situation, I would request the Government to take all necessary steps. Thank you.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri P. K. Biju is associated on this issue raised by Shri Karunakaran.

SHRIMATI K. MARAGATHAM (KANCHEEPURAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to raise urgent and important issue pertaining to my Kancheepuram Constituency.

In Kancheepuram Constituency, at level crossing No. 45 between Thirukalukkundram and Chengalpattu, an over bridge was constructed by the Railway Authorities. Limited Use Subway work was also sanctioned by the Railways in this area. Although it has been sanctioned, yet the work relating to Limited Use Subway has not been started. The school going children, senior citizens and

women find it very difficult to use the over bridge. As the project relating to Limited Use Subway had already been approved by the Railway Authorities, the work should have been started by now. But it is still pending.

I, therefore, urge upon the hon. Railway Minister to look into this matter and instruct the officials concerned to expedite the work of constructing Limited Use Subway at level crossing No. 45 between Thirukalukkundram and Chengalpattu.

I would once again thank my leader hon. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma for giving me an opportunity to speak in this august House. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI NEELAM SONKER (LALGANJ): Hon. Chairperson, I thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Prime Minister through this House. The National Highways Authority was established in 1960 under the Ministry of Transport, with administrative control by the Ministry of Defence, and the Hon. Prime Minister served as its Chairman. Under this authority, the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) was created, commonly known as the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). The permanent department of the Border

Roads Organisation was constituted in 1970. To this day, due to the BRO being under two ministries, it has not been able to perform to its full potential. Engineers feel cheated and demoralised. Promotions are delayed and their hard work is not suitably rewarded. Ninety-five percent of the department's workforce are civilians, and five percent are army personnel on deputation. ... (*Interruptions*) These engineers work in border and Naxal-affected areas, risking their lives to access the most inaccessible locations.

Sir, because the BRO falls under two ministries, it cannot function smoothly. There is always confusion and hesitancy, impeding effective work. This adversely affects the country's road infrastructure, development, and progress. Therefore, through you, I earnestly request the Hon. Prime Minister to fully bring the Border Roads Organisation under the Ministry of Transport, which will enhance its efficiency and capacity. From a strategic point of view, army personnel on deputation must be returned to the forces. I thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

SHRI D. K. SURESH (BANGALORE RURAL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, Vrishabhavathi river which originates in Bangalore was once a great living river. This river flows through my parliamentary

constituency, Bangalore Rural, and Ramanagara district. The waters of Vrishabhavathi were the lifeline for lakhs of people who lived on the banks of the river.

Unfortunately, the river is now dead due to pollution. The banks of the river are heavily urbanized and industrialized. All of Bangalore city's sewage and industrial waste has polluted the river.

Vrishabhavathi river passes through several Sewage Treatment Plants but the cleanup effort has been a total failure. The cleanup is a costly affair and it fails to deliver due to insufficient monitoring and lack of accountability.

The Vrishabhavathi fills up several lakes on its route. The Byramangala lake, Chowkahalli lake, Gopahalli lake and several other lakes, which were once fresh water lakes, are now cesspools.

The water in the entire region where the river flows is contaminated with fluoride and other toxins. Even water from borewells is highly toxic. The water along the river is unfit for human consumption.

As a result, environmental and health issues have risen alarmingly. Asthma, skin and heart disease have become common. Therefore, there is an urgent need to rejuvenate the river.

I am sure this problem exists in many other States in the country as well. Rejuvenation of rivers has to be taken up as a national matter and not just be a State related matter.

To rejuvenate rivers, there has to be coordination among the Ministries of Urban Development, Environment, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Water Resources and the State Governments.

I would request the Government of India to take urgent steps to rejuvenate the Vrishabhavathi river and release adequate funds for the revival of this river.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri K. H. Muniyappa is allowed to associate with the matter raised by Shri D. K. Suresh.

[Translation]

SHRI P.P. CHAUDHARY (PALI): Hon. Chairperson, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on a very important subject. The 'Ebola' epidemic is spreading in West African countries. There is growing fear among the people of our country regarding this severe disease. Ebola is considered the deadliest virus in the world, for which no cure or vaccine has yet been found. UNICEF has also stated that apart from avoiding infection, there is no cure or remedy to eradicate or prevent such a

deadly disease. According to unconfirmed reports, several thousand people have died so far. I would like to inform the House that about 45,000 people of Indian origin reside in West African countries and are trapped in the midst of this dreadful disease. These Indian nationals wish to return home but face many difficulties. Following a warning by WHO, nearly all airlines have indefinitely suspended air services to these countries. Moreover, companies employing Indians are withholding their passports, leaving them with no option but to face death from this terrible disease.

Therefore, through you, I beseech the Government to urgently take necessary steps to protect Indian-origin persons from infection in countries affected by the Ebola virus.

SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL (BIKANER): Hon. Chairperson, thank you for giving me the opportunity to raise a matter of public importance during Zero Hour. I represent Bikaner Parliamentary Constituency. Near Bikaner lies the Anupgarh Assembly Constituency, located on the international border. The demand for construction of a rail line between Anupgarh and Bikaner has long been raised by the public. I highlight this issue because our international border adjoins Pakistan, and the Anupgarh-Bikaner rail line is vital, also being demanded by the Army. I have

raised this issue multiple times in the 15th Lok Sabha and have met the Railway Minister. When the Army states that [English] this project is very important from the strategic point of view, [Translation] and the Planning Commission has approved it, thirteen projects identified as strategically significant have been sent by the Planning Commission to the Railway Headquarters, including the Anupgarh-Bikaner rail line project. However, this project was not included in the 2014-15 budget. Therefore, through you, I request the Railway Minister of the Government of India to ensure that during budget review, the Anupgarh-Bikaner new rail line project is included so that the demand of the Indian Army is fulfilled and citizens of the Anupgarh Assembly Constituency have access to rail travel. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak.
... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri P. P. Chaudhary is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal.

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY (GIRIDIH): Hon. Chairperson, I represent the Giridih Lok Sabha Constituency in Jharkhand. Workers engaged under MGNREGA in Bokaro and Dhanbad are not receiving their wages through the post office. Recently, a road construction project under MGNREGA was

completed in Kurpaniya Panchayat of Bermo block in our area. However, even after more than a month, these workers remain unpaid. Complaints have been made to the block and district administration officials, but no appropriate action has been taken till today.

Therefore, we urge the Government of India to enact a law ensuring that wage payments to workers employed under MGNREGA are made within a stipulated time frame, and that strict action is taken against officials violating this law.

SHRIMATI ANJU BALA (MISRIKH): Hon. Chairperson, after 67 years of independence, we are striving for development in the twenty-first century. We all as citizens wish for happiness and access to essential facilities, of which electricity is the foremost. Unfortunately, there is virtually no adequate electricity supply in Uttar Pradesh. In recent months - April, May, June, and July, agitations demanding electricity took place across the State. The public demanded at least some hours of electricity, so that even poor people without televisions could have light for basic needs, at least a bulb at night to eat by. We agitated in Uttar Pradesh, yet electricity was not provided. Instead, we faced police baton charges, cases, and

court visits with various allegations against the people behind these agitations. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: This is Zero Hour. Please state your demand.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI ANJU BALA: Sir, I raise a question of public importance concerning the severe electricity problem. I request, through you, that a 2,000-megawatt power house be constructed on the land of Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation near Sandila Nagar in Hardoi district.

SHRI K. ASHOK KUMAR (KRISHNAGIRI): Thank you, Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak on the subject of widening of Railway Bridge no. 360-K at Salem-Bengaluru route. I also thank our hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu 'Amma' for giving me an opportunity to be a parliamentarian.

There is a small railway bridge on Salem-Bengaluru railway route. The people of Krishnagiri district, Danganikottai taluk, Kelamangalam Union Thimjepalli and Thottathil Manapalli panchayat use this bridge to reach Dharmapuri. Due to congestion on the bridge the people cover extra 30 kilometres to reach Dharmapuri.

Similarly, the people living in Dharmapuri, Palacode, Marandalli and Panjapalli villages have to cover 30 kilometres to reach Hosur. As the small bridge is not suitable for vehicular traffic, the farmers cannot take their farm products to the market for sale.

Sir, I request you to allocate funds for widening of this small bridge so that the people of above mentioned villages could travel between Dharmapuri and Hosur easily and in time.

19.00 hrs.

SHRIMATI P. K. SHREEMATHI TEACHER (KANNUR): Sir, I thank you for permitting me to raise this serious issue.

Due to heavy and continuous rain, Kerala is facing devastation and destruction. A number of people have died throughout Kerala. Many families are facing hardships due to damage to property and destruction of crops. Many families in the hilly regions are facing starvation. In northern Malabar, a lot of houses have been destroyed due to felling of trees and landslides. Road and rail transport are badly affected. Many houses on the banks of the rivers are facing threat of flood.

The hilly areas of district Kannur, which is my constituency, are facing threat of landslides. National highways in Kerala, especially

those in Kannur, are in a bad shape due to incessant rain. Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government to repair the national highways and to release a special financial package to the State of Kerala to tide over these difficulties. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL (DOMARIYAGANJ): Hon. Chairperson, I am grateful that you have given me the opportunity to speak on a very important issue relating to our country's culture and languages. According to a UNESCO report, 42 languages in 14 Indian states are on the verge of extinction. The Government of India is concerned and has established the Indian Institute of Languages in Mysore to promote these languages. However, no comprehensive survey has yet been conducted. This report identifying the endangered languages comes from UNESCO, not from us. Among these, 11 languages of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are endangered, seven languages of Manipur are threatened, and most endangered languages are found in mountainous regions. For instance, in Uttarakhand, Bangani, in Himachal Pradesh, Bagati, Huduri, Pangvali, and Sirmaudi languages are endangered. Similarly, in Jharkhand, Birhor, in West Bengal, Toto, and in Andaman and Nicobar, languages such as Lamongse, Takhanilang,

Onge, Sanenyo, Sentli, and Tangam are threatened. Languages of Manipur such as Emol, Aka, Puram, and Tarora are also endangered. When the languages of a country, which reflect local culture, tradition, and script, are on the brink of extinction, it undoubtedly raises questions about the identity of Indian culture. Though the Union Government has initiated efforts, the extent of language extinction remains unknown due to lack of survey.

Therefore, through you, I would like to urge the Union Government to first identify and conduct a survey of the languages that are disappearing in these 14 Indian states. Subsequently, the Indian Institute of Languages, Mysore, should undertake the work of preservation, documentation, and promotion of these languages. ... *(Interruptions)* I am concluding in one minute. We demand the inclusion of these languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Recently, Bhojpuri was included in the Eighth Schedule. Rajasthan's languages were also there. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Jagdambika Pal, you have stated your demand.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: Hon. Chairperson, this is a very important matter. I am sincerely grateful to you for giving me the

time to speak. I want that these languages should be surveyed promoted and maintained.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Sharad Tripathi, Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey and Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat associate themselves with the matter raised by Shri Jagdambika Pal.

[English]

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, my 'Zero Hour' submission is in respect of leakage from a chlorination plant in my constituency.

The coastal areas of Kollam and Alappuzha are blessed with rich deposits of heavy sand minerals containing rare earth strategic elements like monazite, limonite, rutile, zircon etc. The Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India, is having control over these beach sand minerals. IRE and KMML located at Chavara in my constituency are the two prestigious public sector undertakings working in this field.

Last week on 6th and 7th of August, it was reported that a gas leakage emanated from a Chlorination Plant of KMML causing suffocation to the children of a nearby school and they had been

hospitalized. This incident has created a reasonable apprehension of fear of safety in the minds of people of that locality.

It is also being reported in the media that the incident was a pre-planned one with a *mala fide* intention to destabilise and weaken the PSUs like KMMML and IRE. A huge quantity of unauthorized smuggling of mineral sand from the coastal areas of Kollam and Allapuzha is also being reported. There were so many attempts to privatise mining of mineral sand since 1990, but the Government has not conceded it considering the large public interest.

It is the prime responsibility of the Government of India and also the State Government to protect the health and safety of the public at-large and ensure the survival of PSU companies. Therefore, I would urge upon the Government of India to have urgent intervention in this matter because it is the Department of Atomic Energy having control over the beach sand minerals. So, the intervention of the Government of India in this matter is highly solicited.

With these words, I conclude and I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 12th August, 2014 at 11 am.

19.06 hrs

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday,
August 12, 2014 / Shravana 21, 1936 (Saka).*

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