

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, March 15, 2021 / Phalguna 24, 1942 (Saka)

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Need to Set up a Special Task Force for Protection of Archaeological Sites and Historical Monuments of Manipur

SHRI MAHARAJA SANAJAOBA LEISHEMBA: The Manipur State Archaeology has devoted to preservation, protection, maintenance and conservation of archaeological sites and historical monuments all over Manipur. Some of the protected monuments/sites are located at international border or State border area. I request the Central Government to set up a Special Task Force to protect and preserve these monuments from encroachers, vandalism and unwanted incidents.

(Shri Sujeet Kumar associated.)

2. Need for Giving Classical Music Status to Odishi Music

SHRI PRASHANTA NANDA: Odissi music is the finest reconciliation of harmony with melody. The individualist character of Odissi music makes every recital an enjoyable exercise in interpretation and self expression. It has its core Ragas of its own.

*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

Athatali is unique to Odissi music. I request the Government to give due classical status to Odissi music which it deserves.

(Shri Sujeet Kumar, Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi, Dr. Amar Patnaik and Dr. Fauzia Khan associated.)

3. Need for Relaxation in Rules Related to Allotment of Accommodation to Personnel of the Central Para Military Forces

SHRIMATI PHULO DEVI NETAM: The personnel of paramilitary forces living in Delhi are provided accommodations as per the rules of allotment of accommodation. When they are deployed in other parts of the country, they have to vacate the allotted accommodation in Delhi within three years. This creates a big problem for the jawans because it disrupts their children's education and destabilizes the family. Therefore, the Government is requested to make a rule to retain the accommodation for at least six years for the jawans of the Central Para-military forces and the jawans on whom penalty has been imposed, should be forgiven.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Need to Honour Rani Abbakka Chowta and Inclusion of her Story in School Curriculum

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: It is very essential to pay obeisance to the freedom fighters belonging to the women community. Rani Abbakka, the Queen of Tulu Nadu, belonging to the Chowta Dynasty, was well skilled in warfare. She not only protected her fort, but also seized the Mangalore Fort and drove away the Portuguese. But, unfortunately she is not known beyond the borders of Karnataka. Similarly, Rani Chennamma of Kittur, Hazrat Mahal, Uda Devi are also not much known. Rani Veeramangai Velu Nachiyar of Sivaganga was the first ever queen who regained not only her fort, but also her Government, from the British. Our history is full of so many brave women fighters. But, they stay only in the folk tales and some school syllabuses. I urge upon the Central Government that lessons on these women fighters should be included in the school textbooks to inspire our young students.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Need to amend Section 54 of the Limitation Act, 1963 regarding Registration of Sale Agreements

SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE PILLI: Some people are sometimes forced to sell their properties with the intent to encash their assets and fulfill their day-to-day needs. But, unfortunately, when they sell their properties, many of the purchasers enter into the Sale Agreement with the sellers by giving them petty amounts as a part of consideration. The sellers fail to fulfil their life desires with these meagre amount. Also, the sellers do not get the consideration amount within the time decided by them. The purchasers knowingly delay execution of contracts.

(Shri Subhash Chandra Singh, Dr. Amar Patnaik, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

6. Racism in the United Kingdom

SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW: Racism is a problem which has global concern. The recent case of Udupi, Karnataka, is a classic case. The impact of such practices of racial discrimination at the highest level in a society would also penetrate at the lower level. The treatment of migrants and their segregation in the UK on racial basis is very well known all over the world. We are a country with a large diaspora in the U.K. and hence there is a natural concern for all of us. If U.K. wants our respect, it has to change. I request the Government to take up this matter with the U.K. Government.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI. S. JAISHANKAR), responding to the matter, said: I noted the sentiments of the House. We have strong ties with the U.K. We will monitor these developments very closely and will take up such matters with great candour when required. We will always champion the fight against racism and other forms of intolerance.

7. Alleged Discrimination by Government between Different Online News Portals

SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI: As per some media reports, a Group of Ministers was formed to come forward with suggestions to neutralize some media agencies which were speaking up against the Government and to promote those agencies which are talking pro-Government. How can in a democracy, it be discriminated between those agencies which speak up for the cause of the people of the country and speak against the Government. This will go against the freedom of speech as well as Press freedom. This is a matter of serious concern which I want to raise to attract the attention of the Government.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

8. Need to Criminalise Marital Rape

SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN: Since decades now, there have been demands from several groups asking that marital rape has to be made a criminal offence. We passed several Acts to give protection to the women from sexual assault but still marital rape is not being treated as an offence. Apart from demands from several quarters, the CEDAW, the Justice Verma Committee have also recommended that the Indian Government should criminalize marital rape. More than hundred countries in the world have made marital rape an offence. I urge the Government to revisit this issue and make sure that marital rape is made an offence.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Need for Inclusion of Awadhi Language in Eighth Schedule to the Constitution

DR. ASHOK BAJPAI: Awadhi language is used as mother tongue among about 5 crore population of India and in about 25 districts of Central Uttar Pradesh. This language has been used in this area since time immemorial. Awadhi language has a rich literature. Article 351 of the Constitution provides that it is the duty of the Central Government to enrich the Hindi language. Hindi language

will prosper if Awadhi language is enriched. I urge the Government that at a time when the grand Ram Temple is being constructed after 500 years, the Awadhi language be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

(Sh Harnath Singh Yadav, Shri Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti and Dr. Sasmit Patra asociated.)

10. Need for COVID Vaccination for Indian Delegation for Tokyo Olympics, 2021

DR. SASMIT PATRA: The Indian delegation for Olympics to be held later this year is already preparing for the same. But, there is a need for Covid-19 vaccination for our athletes and sportspersons who would be appearing and contesting in the 2021 Olympics. If the COVID vaccination is provided at the earliest, it would not only reassure the sportspersons, athletes and the support staff, but would also bolster our efforts for the Olympics in 2021. I urge the Government to pay attention for immediate and urgent COVID vaccination of the Indian Olympics team, so that they can practise well.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

11. Need for Development Aid to Punjab

***SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA:** Due to Covid19, the kind of circumstances that have prevailed, due to the slowdown in the economies of all the State Governments; the economic condition is very weak. The State of Punjab is suffering a loss of Rs. 1,000 crores annually. When the GST regime came into effect, it was said that the States would be given their due share in the GST collections by the Centre. Till date, Punjab has not got its due share of last six months from the Centre. The wheat crop will be harvested from 13th April and the Food Corporation of India has finalised new rules. FCI is to tighten the foodgrain procurement norms. It has just come one month

* Spoke in Punjabi.

earlier to the procurement. Policymakers and farmers see it as yet another attack on State amid ongoing stir against agri laws.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

12. Epidemic proportion of cancer in the country

SHRI HARNATH SINGH YADAV: I want to draw attention to the rapidly increasing spread of cancerous disease. Day-by-day, a terrible situation is emerging in terms of cancer. The subject of greatest concern is that now the spread of this disease has started increasing in children below the age of 18 years. Consumption of chemical mixed substances and drugs, our irregular lifestyle and impurity of land, water and air are special reasons for the rapid spread of cancer disease. For this, it is necessary to ban chemical fertilizers, pesticides and canned foods. Drugs are the leading cause of cancer deaths in the country. In my view it is a heinous crime to put the citizens of the country to death in order to get revenue from alcohol by the governments and this game should stop. The government should formulate a long-term strategy to stop the spread of cancer and the government's trade in alcohol and drugs across the country should stop.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

13. Need for Concrete Steps for Conservation of Taj Mahal

SHRI HARDWAR DUBEY: The Taj Mahal of India, which is included in the World Heritage, is the biggest favourite place for Indian and foreign tourists to visit, but increasing air pollution and water pollution is spoiling the condition of tourism. Foreign and native tourists are going away from the Taj Mahal due to pollution. There are many reasons for the beauty of the Taj Mahal to deteriorate, the garbage gathering around the Taj Mahal tourism zone, the movement of petrol, diesel vehicles, the smoke emanating from industrial chimneys causing acid rain. The river Yamuna, which once used to add beauty to the beauty of the Taj, has now become a problem for her. The river Yamuna is flowing today in Agra only as a drain originating from Delhi and due to this the beauty of Taj Mahal

is deteriorating. The deodorant arising from the Yamuna also bothers the tourists, but there is no improvement in its condition. I request that immediate steps should be taken to protect the beauty of the Taj Mahal from environmental damage. It should be ensured that there is no air pollution and water pollution and no garbage is deposited around the Taj Mahal tourism zone. For this, concrete steps should be taken by the government and strict rules should be implemented.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

14. Need to Start Passenger Train from Haridaspur to Paradip via Kendrapada

SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA SINGH: After 75 years of independence, in seven districts out of 30 districts of odisha, there is no train connectivity; there is no train facility. Work on new train line from Haridaspur to Paradip via Kendrapada is already over and commercial train has been allowed on this line by the Railway Ministry. I request the Railway Ministry to sanction passenger train to Kendrapada because thousands of workers go from Kendrapada to Paradip for day-to-day work.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Dr. Amar Patnaik, Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti and Shri Sujeet Kumar associated.)

15. Need to give priority to teachers and school staff for vaccination

DR. NARENDRA JADHAV: As the vaccination drive progresses and the society returns to normalcy, the next challenge is to overcome the loss of learning during the pandemic. New academic year will start in April and there is a need to accelerate the process of safe reopening of schools, colleges and universities. The Government should categorise teachers as frontline workers and take measures to vaccinate everyone from, Anganwadi, Balwadi, primary school to university level including associated school and college staff. All citizens have to go in person to centres for vaccination. This is not possible for very senior citizens who are 90+ or those who are bed-ridden. I urge upon the Central Government to issue necessary

instructions to States to include teachers in the priority list in the ongoing Phase-2 and also provide mobile ambulance services to cater to very senior citizens and those who are bedridden.

(Dr. Amar Patnaik, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti and Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha associated.)

16. Need for establishment of libraries in prisons

SHRI RAKESH SINHA: There are thousands of prisons in the country, in which the inmates have no means of intellectual development. Today there are many people who commit crimes, and they want to improve themselves. Libraries should be arranged in all the jails of the country and those libraries should not be merely symbolic. In view of the nature of the inmates of the jail and their crime, arrangements should be made to keep such books in those libraries, by reading which they may improve continuously.

(Shri Tiruchi Siva, Dr. Amar Patnaik, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, we have with us seated in the Special Box His Excellency, Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. On behalf of the Members of the House and on my own behalf, I take pleasure in extending a hearty welcome to him and wish our distinguished guest an enjoyable and fruitful stay in our country. We hope that during his stay here, he would be happy to witness our parliamentary system and know more about our own country and our people. Through him, we convey our greetings and best wishes to the IPU Secretariat and its Member countries.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

1. Demand to grant special economic package to revive sugar and spinning mills in eastern Uttar Pradesh

SHRI SAKALDEEP RAJBHAR: Due to the closure of Farmers Cooperative Sugarcane Mill Rasra, Spinning Mill, Rasra and Purvanchal Spinning Mill in Ghazipur, Bahadurganj and District Mau in District, Ballia, Pardha, Swadeshi Cotton Mill, Mau, Uttar Pradesh, all the employees working in these mills became unemployed. Now the families of the employees working in these mills have reached to the brink of starvation. Even after the allocation of funds, these mills could not be functional till date. I request the government to make these closed sugarcane mills and spinning mills functional by giving special economic package, so that unemployed youths of these areas can get employment and the migration of rural unemployed to the city can be stopped and their income can be doubled as per the intention of the Central Government.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

2. Demand to connect Delhi-Vadodara express highway through an approachable road to a sacred place of tribals near district Dausa, Rajasthan

DR. KIRODI LAL MEENA: On National Highway 11A in District Dausa, Rajasthan At 16.5 / 00 KM, there is a very sacred place of tribals. The said site is within a kilometer of the Delhi-Vadodara Expressway. In the wider public interest, this location should be connected by making 'Clover Leaf' near 199/00. About 50-60 crore rupees will be required to make 'Clover Leaf' at this place. Therefore, the tribal site should be connected to the Delhi-Vadodara Expressway through an approach road at the said place.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

3. Demand for establishment of AIIMS in Sundargarh, Odisha

DR. AMAR PATNAIK: The Odisha Government has proposed to the Centre to set up an AIIMS in Sundargarh district which is tribal dominated district in the State. Scheduled Castes also constitute a large proportion of the district population and have reported much higher incidence of poverty. The majority of farmers are marginal farmers. Thus, establishing an All India Institute of Medical Sciences at Sundargarh would cater to this vulnerable population and help in providing quality tertiary care in the backward areas of entire western Odisha. The institution of national repute will also promote medical education in the area. Further, the infrastructure available at Sundargarh can be utilised for setting up of AIIMS, and the Centre may not immediately have to invest on infrastructure. Additionally, the location will be suitable for setting up AIIMS as it is easily accessible through road, railways and air. Therefore, I demand establishment of AIIMS in Sundargarh in Odisha.

(Dr. Fauzia Khan, Shri Prashanta Nanda, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

4. Demand for release of funds and grant of additional mandays under the NREGA to Karnataka

SHRI K.C. RAMAMURTHY: I take this opportunity to thank our hon. Prime Minister for the commendable job he has done in providing Rs. 1.1 lakh crores for NREGA in 2020-21 and providing employment to millions of unskilled workers during Corona pandemic. The Government of Karnataka, with the same spirit, has also undertaken works under NREGA during pandemic to help poor labourers for their sustenance. The hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka has requested for release of Rs. 788 crores under material component and Rs. 375 crores under wage component for 2020-21 to meet the additional demand under NREGA. Hence, I request the Finance Minister to kindly release the amount early. The Chief Minister of Karnataka had also written a letter to the Finance Minister requesting for additional 50 mandays for Karnataka and also requested for release

of money for material component. I request to kindly consider the request of the Government of Karnataka and help the State to take up NREGA works for the benefit of poor, unskilled labour force in the State.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti associated.)

5. Demand for steps for the welfare of denotified and nomadic tribes

SHRI JAIPRAKASH NISHAD: It is known that the country is inhabited by a large population of people of the denotified caste / tribe (nomadic, semi-nomadic and permanent domicile), who in the past had a direct confrontation with the British rule. The British government had declared these denotified tribes born criminals by enacting a law. The law of British rule was abolished by the Government of India in 1952, but it is a sad fact that even today these denotified tribal people are not getting their rights in the country. They are not getting the facilities prescribed for them and they are completely deprived of the mainstream development. These nomadic castes do not get the proper benefits of reservation due to the prosperity of other castes under the reservation category as compared to the exempted and nomadic tribes. I ask the government to identify the denotified caste-tribes all over the country, issue caste certificates to them, put them in a separate subcategory, provide them reservation facilities, prepare a special economic package to bring them into the mainstream and they may be freed from the legal provisions related to regional restrictions.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

6. Demand for opening of SBI branch in Ghindwara, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand

SHRI PRADEEP TAMTA: The people of Ghindwara have been demanding for opening of SBI branch in this region. Due to non-completion of bituminization of road, the work of this branch could not be completed. Since, the roads have now been bituminized and

proposals from various village panchayats have been received through Regional Jan Kalyan Samiti, therefore, the Government is requested to take steps to complete the opening of SBI branch in Ghindwara area at the earliest.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Recent developments pertaining to the welfare abroad of Indians, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the COVID situation

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI. S. JAISHANKAR): rise to apprise this august House of recent developments pertaining to the welfare abroad of Indians, non-resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin in the COVID situation. This is a subject on which many Hon'ble Members have expressed deep interest. We, in the Ministry of External Affairs, also regularly receive communications relating to individual cases and respond to the best of our ability. Such concern is natural and I take this opportunity to place before the House a comprehensive picture on the global state of affairs as a result of COVID, its impact on our people and the Government's response to the challenges that emerged.

Hon'ble Members would be aware that the big issue through the last year was to address the situations of difficulty and distress that many stranded Indians faced abroad. The Prime Minister directed that we undertake the Vande Bharat Mission to bring back our countrymen and women home. This was an all-of-the-Government effort, involving the Ministries of External Affairs, Civil Aviation, Home Affairs, Health, Defence and Shipping, amongst others. A total of 45,82,043 people from 98 countries have returned to India under the aegis of the Vande Bharat Mission. The vast majority came through flights, though there were also some who came by ship and across land crossings. Kerala received the maximum returnees, followed by Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu. UAE was the country from where the maximum number of stranded Indians returned, followed by Saudi Arabia, USA and Qatar. 39% of the returnees were workers, 39%

professionals, 6% students and about 8% visitors and 4.7% stranded tourists.

Hon'ble Chairman Sir, While organizing the return home, the Government was also focused on ensuring that our people were provided the necessary amenities in foreign countries. This applied to those awaiting repatriation as well as those who stayed behind. It involved a vast range of activities that were coordinated by our Embassies and High Commissions. They included providing food, shelter and transportation to supplying masks, PPEs, medical support and even facilitating hospital stays. It involved intense and continuous interactions with foreign governments, pro-active and responsive measures by our Embassy staff and close coordination with community organizations abroad. Government expended an amount of Rs.33.5 crores from the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), whose mandate was perceptively broadened by the Government in 2017 with such contingencies in mind. I should also add that we facilitated the return from India of more than 1.1 lakh foreign passport holders to 120 countries in the same period. Many of them were PIOs and NRIs.

Members would appreciate that the largest repatriation exercise in the history of the world could not have happened without the goodwill and cooperation of partner governments. And if that was so forthcoming, it is because of the enormous efforts of this Government's diplomacy, starting from the Prime Minister personally. Whether it was in reaching out, invoking relationships, using our networking or engaging in direct contacts, we really went all out to ensure the welfare of our brothers and sisters abroad. And let me emphasize this: at the end of the day, the sympathetic response of others reflected their positive image of us. Indeed, this was a real testimony of India's enhanced global standing as a result of 6 years of exceptionally energetic diplomacy.

The focus of our efforts in the last few months has now shifted to Indians going back to their usual places of work, study and domicile. To that end, our Government has concluded air transport bubbles that are temporary reciprocal arrangements for commercial

passenger services until the resumption of regular international flights. Such arrangements have been concluded with 27 nations so far. The Air India group alone has operated more than 9500 flights, taking 10.9 lakh passengers abroad. The largest numbers, not surprisingly, have gone to the Gulf. During the pandemic, our Prime Minister had declared that the Government would take care of both lives and livelihood. This guidance has been the basis for the activities of our diplomacy abroad.

Hon'ble Chairman Sir, just as the Government has led the way for an economic recovery at home, we are also similarly untiring in our efforts to help renew livelihoods for our people abroad. The air travel arrangements are a necessary enabling measure. But beyond that, we have been active in urging our partner governments to look sympathetically at the employment of our citizens as they chart their own recovery pathway. The Gulf has been the focal point of our endeavours, though this is a global effort on our part. In recent months, the Prime Minister has engaged the leaders of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Oman. Under his directions, I have traveled even during the COVID to UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman to discuss with the governments there the welfare of our people. Because of restrictions at their end, such travel was not possible to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. But I have been in regular touch with their Foreign Ministers. MOS Shri Muraleedharan Ji, on his part, has also gone to Oman and UAE. I have recently hosted the UAE Foreign Minister in India and expect to do so of Kuwait very soon.

During our visits to the Gulf, we have interacted with both the representative community organizations and the partner governments. From the community, the overall picture was that our people were well taken care of during the pandemic by the host authorities. From the governments, the message was of appreciation for the responsibility shown by our people amidst the pressures of the pandemic. We were told that the message of discipline and social distancing that was so strongly propagated by our leadership at home had an equally strong impact abroad. The support extended from India for the stay and travel of our citizens was warmly acknowledged by

community and governments alike. The provision of medical supplies and food items from India as an exceptional gesture to the Gulf during this period clearly had a powerful resonance. So did the arrival of health professionals and medical staff, especially the dedicated medical team we sent to Kuwait. From our recent interactions, we have reason to expect that partner governments in the Gulf would be helpful in facilitating the early return of many who had been compelled to go back because of the pandemic.

Hon'ble Chairman Sir, the Government is fully cognizant of the employment concerns that our people abroad have in the context of the COVID pandemic. Especially in the Gulf, there has been tremendous economic and social disruption that has impacted them. We have softened it somewhat but real challenges are there to be addressed. Let me assure the House that we take this as a priority. Both my MOS and I, and indeed our Ambassadors and senior officials, spend time and effort to go into these problems in the greatest detail. We have been in touch with most community organizations and get a regular feedback on both the health situation and the economic recovery. We are aware that there are problems of compensation, re-employment and re-skilling that need solutions. And these are today the core of our agenda with our partner governments.

The welfare of students studying abroad has also been of particular concern for all of us. Across the world, our Embassies were given instructions to reach out to them, monitor their situation and assist their return, where required. As with workers and professionals, the focus has now shifted to their going back to universities. Some countries have been more open in this regard than others, obviously reflecting their particular COVID challenge. This, therefore, remains a high priority and our endeavour will be to encourage an early return to normalcy.

Seafarers have been another category requiring particular attention. We have worked with shipping companies across the world to ensure their well-being and where required, return to India. The challenges presented by crew change procedures were daunting but

the flexibility shown by various stake holders allowed us to overcome them. Members would recall the predicament of two crews who were in particular difficulty outside Chinese ports. Their predicament was also eventually resolved through great perseverance. We continue to interact with many governments to devise more friendly SOPs for crew change requirements.

Our fishermen have also been affected by the difficulties arising from the pandemic. We saw, in particular, serious problems faced by those who were working out of Iran. Some Gulf nations also witnessed this, perhaps to a lesser degree. Many Members expressed their anxieties at that time. Here too, the repatriation phase is over and the re-employment one has just started.

Hon'ble Chairman Sir, in conclusion, let me underline that from the very beginning, the Modi Government has been deeply committed to the welfare and protection of Indians abroad. And equally, we value and nurture our relationship with PIOs. The COVID pandemic was a test of our commitment on this matter, as on so many others. And whether it was the problems of the worker or the student, the professional or the tourist, we have risen to the occasion. A huge collective effort by nameless and faceless individuals from our embassies and other organizations – in India and abroad - made that possible. Like the nation at home, they too were inspired by leadership and vision. I wish to assure this august House that in the days ahead, as our quest for normalcy progresses, as the global market place and work place resume activities, as centres of study reopen the doors, we will be there - to encourage, facilitate, secure and support.

The hon'ble Minister, replying to the points raised by the members, said: If I were to take up the common issues, because many of them raised similar issues, I think the first issue is of our workers abroad, especially in the Gulf. Our main endeavour is to get them back. Right from the very beginning, we started a skill mapping programme especially for workers coming back from the Gulf which we then sent out to the State Governments telling them about the skills of the people who are returning. About students, we are not just trying to make sure they don't lose a year, but we are actually trying to

make sure they can get back as soon as possible. Our priorities for bubble would be for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; Japan, China and Singapore in the East. These are the countries where so far bubbles have not really worked very well. We will keep extending bubbles as we go along. In so far as the issue of Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana is concerned, I think the issue would be: what were the claims raised and what was the percentage of settled claims? I would be very happy to look into that and give him a detailed reply.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

- 1. The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021** was introduced.
- 2. The National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019**

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE; THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT; THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ; AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said: The Bill to declare certain institutions of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management to be the institutions of national importance and to provide for instructions and research in food technology, entrepreneurship and management and for the advancement of learning and dissemination of knowledge in such branches and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration.

DR. L. HANUMANTHAIAH: The stated objective of the Bill is to confer the status of national importance to two Institutes which are working in the country. One is at Kundli in Haryana and the other one is at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. The above Institutes are presently administered by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. The Bill aims to provide functional autonomy to these two Institutes to design and develop courses, undertake research and achieve enhanced status in their academic pursuits to emerge as

pioneers at the global level. India is a major producer of agriculture and food items in the world. It includes pulses, milk, tea and spices. India needs developed, skilled and technical manpower for achieving the real targets. Demand for processed food in India and abroad is increasing now. The NIFTEM, 2019 Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha on 13.01.2019 by the then Minister. The introduction of the Bill is to lower the wastage of food in the country which is of a serious concern. Every third child is malnourished in the country which is also of a serious concern. There is a demand in this industry to create alternative employment. One per cent growth in the food processing industry would generate five lakh direct employment and fifteen lakh indirect employment. So, there is a great demand for skilled professionals, for food collection, food processing, cold chain management, etc. Therefore, food processing industry has got a big challenge and a big scope also. Food processing industry is one area which has the potential to add value addition to farm products. India is the Sixth largest food and grocery market in the world. So, a major employment provider is agriculture. In western countries, 60 to 80 per cent food processing is being done and particularly, in U.S.A, 65 per cent of the fruits and vegetables are processed. The food processing in India has a lot of scope and we have to take it up. Income generation potential of food processing should be a priority. Institute of Technology Act of 1961 recommends three Members of Parliament to be in the Governing Council. These three Members are not there. The institute should waive the fee and encourage the rural students to come into the system. Reservation to SC/ST/OBCs should be implemented properly in these institutes which has been recommended by the Standing Committee.

DR. ASHOK BAJPAI: The purpose of this Bill is to make the two institutions already running an institution of national importance. Our participation in the field of food technology is still less than that of all the developed countries of the world. Lack of participation in the field of processing makes many of our products useless. This Bill will prove to be a milestone in that direction. These institutions will be able to perform work related to academic research and administrative work. There will be two bodies in these

institutions. The first would be the Board of Governors. There will be a Senate. There will be teaching related work in the Senate. The accounts of each institution will be audited from time to time by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The legislation will help institutions to provide functional autonomy, to formulate curricula, to undertake research activities and to improve their academic activities so that they can become world class institutions. 5 per cent fee will be waived for the poor students in these institutions. With this, manpower will be required in the food processing sector. This will provide new employment opportunities. With the introduction of this Bill, there will definitely be an economic improvement in the rural sector and agriculture-based industries will be set up.

SHRI BHASKAR RAO NEKKANTI: There is a need to set a cap on the maximum fees which is being charged in these institutions. This thing has also been recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee. There is less availability of skilled and trained persons in this field. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the skill development. The cooperation of academia, industry and farmers is necessary in this area. This requires coordination of food processing units with farmers.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: This legislation, namely, the National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019, proposes to confer the status of national importance upon two institutes. One is the National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management in Haryana and the other one is the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology in Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. It has been in practice that the institutes of national importance do not follow the reservation policy. The Minister can alleviate the apprehension that the reservations will not be affected in any manner. Also, in the Board of Governors, the Central Government has got a Member, ex-officio member and two representatives having special knowledge in the field of food processing industry nominated by Central Government and one more member also from the Central Government whereas there is only one

representative from the State Government. The State Governments should also be given the due importance.

DR. BANDA PRAKASH: This Bill states that the two existing Institutions shall become the Institutes of National Importance. Consequently the nomenclature of both the existing Institutions will be National Institute of Food Technology and Entrepreneurship and Management. India being the third largest producer of all the food items, there will be more demand for such courses in the country. I request the hon'ble Minister to expand it for more Institutions in different parts of the country. Telangana Government is doing a good work in food processing industry, particularly in agriculture sector, fishery and veterinary sectors. The representation of Parliamentarians, two from Lok Sabha and one from Rajya Sabha, should be there in all the prime Institutions or Institutions of National Importance. The reservation policy should be implemented and fee concession should be there for SC, ST and OBC and economically weaker students.

SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE PILLI: This Bill confers the status of Institutions of National Importance to the National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management at Kundli, Haryana and the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. The objective of the Bill, is, to improve the research at these two institutions and to take the challenges faced by the stakeholders in the food technology sector. This Bill will definitely help the food processing sector of the country. And as food Processing is a labour-intensive industry, it will help in providing localized employment opportunities and thus will reduce the need of migration. Through this legislation, better quality research would be done which will ultimately help in reducing wastages, increase value addition, ensure better prices for farmers while ensuring availability of affordable and quality produce to consumers. The farming economy of the country cannot progress unless the food processing technology is advanced and provide better solutions. These two institutions have done great work on food technology so far and have definitely earned the status of the Institutes

of National Importance. I would request the Central Government to establish an institution of national importance in Andhra Pradesh also.

SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD: The Bill provides that the Tribunal will settle the disputes. It will need to be amended. In the tuition fee waiver scheme, the income limit of EWS has been kept at 8 lakhs, but now it is saying that tuition fee will be waived for people with income of 6 lakhs. Food is being produced in our country, but it is also being destroyed too much, so the country will be benefited immensely by the establishment of this institute. More such institutes should be set up in our country so that our country can become self-sufficient in the matter of food grains.

SHRI RAM CHANDRA PRASAD SINGH: I support this bill. There is no representation of farmers in its Board of Governors. The farmer's representation should also be there. CFTRI, Mysore should also be included in the Council. I would request that there is a lot of potential for fruits, vegetables etc. in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal. Therefore, such institutes should be opened in these states as well.

PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: I would urge that such an institute should be opened in Bihar as well. If this happens, Bihar will get benefited from it. Jute processing is still at the abysmally low stage here, arrangements may be done for that as well. Its Board of Governors does not include the farmer. The farmer should be included in the Board of Governors. I also have my own concerns about Fee waiver. There should also be a provision for reservation in it.

SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR: The main objective of the Bill is to give national importance to the two institutions. farmer should be included in the Board of Governors. Likewise, as per the recommendations of the Standing Committee, Members of Parliament also should be included. There is a need to establish a branch of this institute in Andhra Pradesh. Adulteration of food items is a major issue. For this purpose, skill development has to be taken care of by these two institutes in order to prevent food adulteration. There is no sufficient representation of States in the

Board of Governors. So, States should be given proper representation in the Board of Governors.

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: When it comes to creation of Institutes of National Importance we are on the side of the Government. Raising quality of education ought to be a priority for every good Government. Food technology and agriculture education should be receiving a special patronage of the Government if Bharat really intends to move towards Atmanirbharta. This sector needs a lot of attention. If farmer is trained effectively to become an entrepreneur, India can march-forward with her head held high. Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative must include strengthening of all such institutes of crucial importance that are functioning in the nation. I also to urge the Government to pay attention and strengthen the KVKs which are centres of information for farmers.

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: I want to say that if the condition of the farmers of this country is to improve, then such institutes should be established in every state of the country. In the last six years, there has not been a single food processing industry of farmers in Haryana. There should also be set up agro-based industries in the country. Until the agro-based industries increase in this country, the condition of the farmer can not improve.

SHRI RAMJI: This Bill is a welcome move and After this, there will be great research and education in the field of food technology. Similar to IITs and IIMs, the system of reservation should also be followed within these institutes. In this country, Dalits, Adivasis and backward children should also get free education in these institutes so that children of backward, Dalit and tribal society can also study in higher education.

Hon'ble Minister, replying to the discussion, said: The Bill came in the Rajya Sabha in February 2019, which was referred to the standing committee. The Standing Committee had made some amendments in it which were accepted by the Council of Ministers and now it has again come up for discussion before the Rajya Sabha. I am happy that many learned members expressed their views on this

Bill and expressed their satisfaction with this Bill. I thank everyone for this. NIFTEM and IIFPT institutes are already exist and working in the field of food processing. As a result of the farmer-friendly policies of our country, our country is rapidly becoming a leader. We are at number one or two in the field of production in the world. Our farmers are making progress in the field of production. But the management of crop after harvest is a matter of crisis even today, due to which farmers are also being harmed. Food processing is an area that can solve many problems exist in the field of agriculture. So far 106 lakh tonnes of food have been brought under conservation and processing under 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana'. 444 lakh employment opportunities have also been created under this scheme and 147 lakh farmers have been benefited. 10 thousand crore rupees have been given for food processing under 'self-sufficient package'. When it comes to the management of crops, we will definitely have to move towards processing. When we move ahead in the field of processing, we will definitely need a skilled manpower and this manpower will be prepared by such institutions. Right now both these institutes add around 400 manpower. When they get the status of international importance, then they will become equal to our IITs and IIMs and all the students who want to come in this field will be attracted to it. When our manpower equipped with technology is ready, processing will definitely increase. When processing increases, the farmer will get benefited, employment opportunities will be created and we will also be able to increase our exports. I want to request all people to support this Bill. I want to assure that if an institution of national importance is formed, then there will be reservation in it. One thing has also come up that farmers should be in it, since this subject is related to food processing, so many experienced people related to processing are present in its Senate and this Bill provides that Parliament Representation will also remain on the council.

The motion for consideration of the Bill was adopted.

Clauses etc., as amended, were adopted.

The Bill, as amended, was passed.

DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH, initiating the discussion,
said: I want to draw your attention to the recommendations of the Standing Committee of this department. You are demanding the funds but the current projects are not being monitored. Projects are incomplete and their cost is also increasing. The recommendations state that in spite of funds, you are not spending the same. Your Department has reduced allocation for ground water. You have not fully utilized the funds under the Jal Jivan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin). You have money but you are taking loans. You have not been able to meet your goal in micro irrigation. You could not utilize the funds under Namami Gange and Clean Ganga Fund. Rajiv Gandhi Ji brought water policy in 1987 and the same was revised in the UPA government in 2012. Today we should discuss the water policy again and based on it, we should make new policy. You should fix the priority in the Nal-Jal Yojna. The first priority should be poor people, families of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and slums areas. There should be a clear policy regarding ground water. Most of the irrigation in India is done by 'lift irrigation'. Today, about 60 per cent of the rainwater flows into the sea because the forests are felling and water harvesting works are not being done. We need to pay attention to the ground water. We started the 'Pani Roko Abhiyan' in Madhya Pradesh and we got positive results. You need to pay attention to watershed management. We had made a provision in Madhya Pradesh that there should be a system of water harvesting in all buildings. Today it is not being implemented. In future, the problem of water will become serious, so it needs attention. We should assess the level of ground water every year. Recharging of ground water should also be done. Floods take place in the Himalayan rivers every year. We should resolve this by talking to Nepal, Bhutan and China. If we make a proper advance plan, provide adequate funds and provide compensatory land to the people along with employment, then the problem can be solved. Participatory management is essential in water management. The law of irrigation

panchayats is not being followed. Special attention needs to be given to the treatment of the catchment areas of large projects. For integrated water utilization, we should discuss with water experts.

SHRI GOPAL NARAYAN SINGH: No work has been done for last 60 years on the schemes made till date for small rivers. Today the Prime Minister is giving priority to such works. Works like renovation of dams and water conservation system have been started. Today many ponds have been built in Vidarbha. The schemes which were defunct during the Congress rule are going to be completed today. We had the 'North-Koyal Yojna', today that yojna is almost being completed with the initiative of the Prime Minister and the Ministry. Under the 'MNREGA', pond construction works have also been started. Construction of Dams have also been started on the river drains originating from the mountains. The Prime Minister is trying to provide pure tap water to the entire country. Today you will find water-tanks in all the villages. The 'Swachhta Abhiyan' started by the Prime Minister has become a campaign for the whole country. Today, a campaign is going on in the panchayats of the villages for 'Swachhta Abhiyan' in the villages too. The Prime Minister fulfils what he says. Our Government tried its best to implement whatever plan was formulated and also allocated a budget for it. The '*Ganga Safai Yojana*' was going on since Rajiv Gandhiji's tenure, but it was completed in these four years. About 70 per cent of the Ganga has been cleaned. When all the sewage treatment plants are commissioned, the Ganga will be completely cleaned within a year or two. The Delhi government is not running even a single project to clean the Yamuna. The Congress should tell when the Sardar Sarovar Project was completed? Finally, I wish that the Jal Shakti Ministry should keep moving ahead with the same pace. Therefore, I would urge all of you to give your support on this.

SHRI M. SHANMUGAM: Tamil Nadu is a riparian State. And, the Cauvery is one of the important rivers in the South and it provides irrigation and drinking water facilities to more than three States. Cauvery Delta in Tamil Nadu is known as granary of the South and gets irrigation facilities from the Cauvery river. But unfortunately,

due to denying of our share of water, we are suffering. we have demanded for a flood carrier canal linking river Cauvery and Gundar to divert surplus waters to drought-prone districts for the benefit of people. But, clearance from Central Water Commission is awaited. We, on behalf of the DMK Party, urge upon the Central Government to accord technical clearance and financial support for this project. But, the Central Government has failed to play its role and with the result, one State is fighting against another State. Actually, if the Central Government adhered to the guidelines and principles for the riparian States, the problem would not have come. Regarding the conservation and rejuvenation of rivers, the Ministry is supposed to fulfil the objective of rejuvenation of rivers through municipal sewage and industrial effluents treatment, river surface cleaning and rural sanitation. But its activities are far from satisfaction. On the water deficit, nothing has been done to conserve and rejuvenate the water resources. During monsoon, the water is not stored in water bodies. All the water bodies are in dry condition and desiltation has not been done for years together. Therefore, the Government should allocate specific funds for desiltation and development of existing water bodies. The Government should come out with an effective scheme for rejuvenation of peninsular rivers. During rainy season, on the areas near sea coast, backwater spoils the fertile land with saline water. Therefore, canals on the sea coast should be constructed so that the excess rain water will get collected in the canals. Similarly, mangrove forest should be encouraged which is environment-friendly and also prevent sea erosion. Nearly 60 per cent of all districts in the country have issues related to either availability of ground water or quality of ground water. There is fast ground water depletion. Therefore, there should be a mechanism to control the development of ground water resources. Tamil Nadu being a water-deficit State, I would urge the Government to pay more attention to the renovation of traditional water bodies in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE PILLI: The Jal Shakti Ministry was created in 2019. In 2021-22, the Ministry of Jal Shakti received an allocation of Rs. 69,053 crores, which is 64 per cent annual increase over the erstwhile expenditure of 2019-20. The

Jal Jeevan Mission will be launched to enable universal water supply and liquid waste management in urban areas. The Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 will be implemented. The 15th Finance Commission recommended greater emphasis on availability of safe drinking water and sanitation services to protect human health during infectious disease outbreaks. Further, it recommended that 60 per cent of the total grants for rural local bodies to be spent on these sectors during 2021-26. I request the Government to implement this recommendation. I congratulate the Government for launching the Phase II of Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin with an outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores. However, the Government of Andhra Pradesh had in the first Budget in 2019-20 allocated Rs. 13,139.23 crore to the Water Resources Department to address the irrigation and drinking water problems. The allocation for Polavaram Project in that Budget was Rs. 5,254.84 crore of which Rs. 1,200.41 crore is earmarked for resettlement and rehabilitation, Rs. 1,548.72 crore for canals etc. and Rs. 2,367.32 crore for dam construction work. The State Government is determined to complete the Poola Subbaiah Veligonda Project Tunnel-1 in a year so as to provide irrigation water to 1.19 lakh acres. The phase - I of Galeru Nagari Sujala Sravanthi Project is also ongoing. Similar measures will be taken to complete phase-I works of Handri Niva Sujala Sravanti Irrigation Project. I request the Central Government to support the initiatives of the Andhra Pradesh Government and release adequate funds especially for the Polavaram Project.

CH. SUKHRAM SINGH YADAV: In the Union Budget this year, Rs. 50 thousand crore has been allocated for drinking water supply and Rs. 10 thousand crore for sanitation. If this amount is used properly, then all the problems will be solved. Air, water and food are the most essential items for human life. Water should be the first priority of the Government. The Government will also have to ensure that the air remains pure and water is conserved. But, today, the land mafia continues to encroach upon rivers. Due to this, rivers are shrinking. And when the rivers shrink, more flooding will occur. The encroachment upon water bodies has led to shortage of water. We use rain water for farming. However, due to climate change, it does not

rain at the right time and this causes problems in farming. Therefore, the Government has to ensure that rain water harvesting is done. For this, there is a need to formulate a scheme now. The Government should ensure that rain water harvesting is must and those who fail to do so will be subject to legal action. Now even small puddles and ponds are being occupied in the villages by the land mafia. Strict action should be taken on this. If the rivers will be inter-linked, then the water table will not go down. When Mulayam Singhji was the Chief Minister, this work was undertaken. If there is a good scheme, then the Central Government should execute it. The Government will have to work on water conservation. ROs are being used in cities, due to which 80 per cent of the water goes waste. The government should find some solution to this. There is no water system in the villages. We have to undertake rain water harvesting. Secondly, water should be used judiciously. When water is conserved, then only we will survive.

SHRI RAM CHANDRA PRASAD SINGH: Our North Bihar is completely devastated by floods every year. This damages the infrastructure and the crops. An agreement was to be reached with Nepal to build an elevated dam. So, till this dam is constructed, a separate fund of at least Rs. 30 to 40 thousand crores should be created for Bihar. Farakka dam also caused a lot of injustice. Since, the silt of the Ganges is not removed, massive flooding is caused. So, An expert team should be formed in connection with Farakka Dam. In Bihar, the NDA government has launched a scheme to provide water at each farm. Therefore, I would request the Ministry to extend aid to the Government of Bihar so as to implement its schemes. With a view to provide tap water in each house, the Government will have to ensure good quality of pipes and taps. For this, a meeting should be held with the manufacturers, so that pipes and taps are made available at reasonable rates. The project to inter-link the Kosi and Mechi rivers of North Bihar has been approved by the Central Government, for which I would like to thank the Central Government. This will provide irrigation facilities to 2.14 lakh hectares of land.

The scheme to inter-link about nine rivers of Bihar has been sent to the Central Government for approval. My request would be that all these should be given priority so that we can properly utilise water in Bihar.

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****Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.