

## RAJYA SABHA

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### \*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

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(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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Wednesday, March 17, 2021 / Phalguna 26, 1942 (Saka)

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#### MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

##### 1. Corruption in Maa Mahamaya Cooperative Sugar Mills, Kerta, in Surajpur District of Chhattisgarh

**SHRI RAM VICHAR NETAM:** Maa Mahamaya Cooperative Sugar Factory is established in Maryadit Kerata, District Surajpur. Corruption is rampant in this factory on a large scale, due to which the farmers are suffering huge economic loss and the factory is also suffering losses. I also had a continuous correspondence in this regard and after exposing this corruption, there were all kinds of agitations as well. Despite this, no action has been taken in this regard as yet. I would like to draw the attention of the government that strict action should be taken against the culprits by conducting a detailed inquiry in this regard.

*(Shri Subhash Chandra Bose Pilli, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti and Shrimati Chhaya Verma associated.)*

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

## **2. Rise in Prices of L.P.G. Cylinders**

**SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA:** My mention relates to the concern over price hike of subsidized and non-subsidized domestic gas cylinder by the oil companies. It is unjustified and will be an intolerable burden on the people already suffering from price rise. For a poor family, it is impossible to bear this cost. This is a matter of serious concern. This will affect the health and the food security of women. Hence, these must be placed and discussed in Parliament.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **3. Acquiring of Fertile Land for N.T.P.C. Plant in Barauni, Bihar**

**SHRI A.D. SINGH:** My submission relates to saving the livelihood of hundreds of farmers in Bihar. It is about NTPC plant at Barauni in Bihar which needed land for taking out the waste of the coal plant. Hundreds of acres of barren land is available next to the NTPC plant which is about ten metres. Instead, in its own wisdom, the Bihar State Government allocated them 290 acres of land, five kilometres away from the plant which is highly fertile and which should not have been taken over. I urge that this matter should be taken up with the State Government.

*(Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha, Shri Subhash Chandra Singh and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

## **4. Safety of Women and Girls in Rural Areas**

**DR. AMEE YAJNIK:** My topic is regarding public safety for women and girls in rural areas. Available data and studies show that these spaces pose a serious threat to the safety and security of women. That is why there is a drop-out from middle schools and the girls are devoid of getting education. Therefore, these public spaces need to be made safer for women and girls. I would urge the Government to take

some concrete steps in this direction so that they can feel safe and secure in these places.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**5. Need to Honour Freedom Fighters and to Confer Bharat Ratna on Shri Biju Patnaik Posthumously.**

**SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN:** I want to speak about freedom fighters. A freedom fighter who has done a lot for the country but I think he has not received due respect. Our honorable Prime Minister is vigorously pursuing 'Self-reliant India', but 'Self-reliant India' was started 60 years ago by Biju Patnaik. If he had not put in place Hindustan Aeronautics Limited 60 years ago, we would not have a self-reliant India today. I want to say that a leader like Biju Patnaik must get 'Bharat Ratna'.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**6. Need to Release Funds under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana for the Development of Villages**

**CH. SUKHRAM SINGH YADAV:** I want to bring to your kind notice that the development of villages which we have adopted as model village under Sansad Adarsh Village Scheme, has stopped as funds have dried. I urge the Government to release funds for this purpose without delay so that the development of such villages may gather momentum.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**7. Need to Develop the Birthplace of Sri Sai Baba at Pathri in Parbhani District of Maharashtra**

**DR. FAUZIA KHAN:** In Marathwada region of Maharashtra, Shirdi is visited by many people to pay their reverence to Sai Baba. But, attention also needs to be paid to the development of Pathri, which is 8 kms from Parbhani and is said to be the birth place of Sai Baba and thousands of devotees visit this place. So, this place can be developed as a place of religious tourism. I would also request the Government that if Pathri, Nanded, Aurangabad,

Mahurgad, Ajanta, Ellora, Aundha Nagnath, Parli Vaidyanath and Daulatabad is are developed into tourist hubs and a luxury train is started for these places, Marathwada can receive a lot of upliftment through this.

*(Shri Prashanta Nanda and Shri Subhash Chandra Singh associated.)*

#### **8. Need for Suitable Housing Facilities for Construction Workers at their Work Place**

**SHRI MAHESH PODDAR:** It is sad that our attention does not go towards the pathetic condition of the workers engaged in construction work. They spend their entire life travelling to various workplaces and lives in the tin shed. The childhood of their children also elapses in the same environment. There is no education for them, nor is there any minimum facility to live. During the Corona last year, many shortcomings of our society had emerged, out of which the issue of migration of construction workers also came up. I would like to urge this government which is sensitive to the poor and labourers, that this situation should be rectified immediately by taking solid action without any delay.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **9. Controversial Statements by Persons Holding Public Office**

**SHRI K.T.S. TULSI:** I wanted to express my concern over deteriorating standards of public discourse. That is a matter of concern for all of us because the country, particularly the young people, look up to us as role models. I am only saying that so far as crimes like rape are concerned, they cannot be justified by one reason or the other.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **10. Need to Confer Bharat Ratna on Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Posthumously on his 111<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary**

**SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:** Dr. Lohia contributed immensely towards securing freedom of the country. He participated in the Dandi Yatra with Gandhiji. When Gandhiji was

arrested on August 9, 1942, in the "Quit India Movement", Dr. Lohia took over the reins of the "Quit India Movement". 23rd March is his 111<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. We demand that the government honor him with the "Bharat Ratna" on the auspicious occasion of his 111th birth anniversary.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **11. Need to Enact Law for Sharing of Revenue Earned on News Items by Social Media with Print and Electronic Media**

**SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI:** As we all know that the traditional news media like the print media, news channels and news broadcasters are passing through their worst phase in recent history. They are in deep financial crisis. Earlier, it was because of pandemic and now it is because of tech giants like YouTube, Facebook and Google. We all know that these traditional news media make heavy investments by employing anchors, journalists and reporters. They gather the news, verify those pieces of news and deliver credible information. Advertisement is the main source revenue for the news industry. But, in the past few years, with the advent of tech giants like Google, Facebook and YouTube, the largest share of advertisements is taken away by these tech giants. I would urge that we should follow countries like Australia. Last week, the Australian Parliament passed a law by which they have compelled Google to share advertisement revenue with the news media. And now France and other European countries are making laws for sharing of advertisement revenue. India should take a lead in making Google and Facebook pay a fair share of earnings they make from domestically-produced news content on the Internet.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **12. Need for Financial and Medical Aid for Children Suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy**

**SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA:** There is a disease called spinal muscular disease, which affects the children from the time they are born up to two years, and causes movement disorder among them.

There is only one drug for this disease, which is manufactured in the US and that drug costs Rs.16 crores. There is only one medicine which can save these children. There are several children who suffer from this rare disease. There are four suggestions. Government may bargain in this regard and may get us a better price for these drugs collectively. Tax-waiver should be compulsory in all these cases. The States and the Centre must have a revolving fund to help these children. CSR can also be encouraged to save some of these children.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **13. Need to Establish a Separate Bench of the Allahabad High Court in Western Uttar Pradesh**

**SHRI VIJAY PAL SINGH TOMAR:** I want to raise this topic again. About 22 districts in western Uttar Pradesh are agitating for the setting up of a bench of the High Court. Many poor people have been deprived of justice during this corona period. More than nine lakh cases are pending in the High Court of Uttar Pradesh. About 50 percent of them belong to these 22 districts. I would like to request that a bench of the High Court be set up in Meerut.

*(Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Subhash Chandra Singh and Shri Deepender Singh Hooda associated.)*

### **14. Need to Enact Women's Reservation Bill and Obligatory Paternity Leave to Bridge Gender Pay Gap in the Country**

**DR. AMAR PATNAIK:** Article 39 of our Constitution provides equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Several judgements of the Supreme Court have emphasized on the same point, but gender-pay gap still remains a big issue in our country. One of the main issues here is the cultural norms where woman is projected as the primary care-giver. Many of the factors causing this pay gap have declined over the years, but this stereotype remains. In India, the National Human Rights Commission has made several recommendations. One, more women should be in positions of decision making. The second, changing the expectation that women should be the ones who raise children. It could be done through

obligatory paternity leave for fathers. It should be made compulsory for both the parents to take leave. By doing that, women and men would be put in the same position and the gender gap would decrease.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **15. Need to Make OTP Mandatory for Withdrawal from ATMs**

**SHRI RAMKUMAR VERMA:** The revolution of 'Digital India' has brought unexpected results. It has a lot of modes including UPI, online banking etc. Despite taking into account a lot of security points related to ATMs, fraudsters are committing frauds. In order to prevent ATM fraud, I would like to request the Minister to make it mandatory to enter OTP after entering the PIN. This will help in preventing fraud.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **16. Fraudulent Activities through Online Platforms, Fake Call Centres and Fake Domains of Various Banks**

**SHRI SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA:** This important topic is related to the serious fraud committed by some criminal elements using online platforms, fake call centres and fake domains of many banks and consumer institutions. These cyber criminals call consumers and collect OTPs from them. Suddenly the money is withdrawn from the consumer's account. In some cases even more money is withdrawn than the credit limit. Generally, if a person withdraws more money than the credit limit, it is not approved by the bank. I request the Hon'able Minister that prompt action should be taken on this subject.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **17. Need to Fill up the Vacant Faculty Posts in Premier Educational Institutions**

**SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:** According to recent report of the HRD Ministry, approximately 38 per cent faculty posts are lying vacant at India's premier institutions like IITs, NITs, IIMs and IISERs. As a consequence of such shortage of faculty,

quality of education in these premier institutes is gradually degrading. Therefore, I urge that urgent and suitable directions may please be issued to the Government of India to take necessary and appropriate steps to initiate the process of filling up these vacancies at the earliest.

*(Dr. Amar Patnaik and Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha associated.)*

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## **SPECIAL MENTIONS**

### **1. Demand to Recognise P.G. Diploma in Clinical Cardiology from IGNOU**

**SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR:** PG Diploma in Clinical Cardiology (PGDCC) doctors, after MBBS, have done two years' full-time course from IGNOU. The IGNOU applied to the Medical Council of India for recognition in 2010 and 2012, which was rejected. The PGDCC doctors appealed in the Delhi High Court, which got decided in their favour on 17.09.2019, stating that IGNOU did not require prior MCI permission. The IGNOU submitted response to MCI's rejection to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and, in turn, the Ministry directed the Board of Governors, MCI, to re-evaluate PGDCC course for recognition. Constant denial by the MCI/BOG/NMC and not upholding the court judgment is leaving the PGDCC doctors, with no career growth. I request the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to implement Court orders.

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

### **2. Demand to Declare Birthplace of Rashtriya Kavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar as National Heritage Monument at Simariya in Begusarai District of Bihar**

**SHRI RAKESH SINHA:** In Dinkar's writings, comprehensive human values have been addressed. His writing has not only enriched literature, but has also served to awaken the spirit of social consciousness and universal morality. His creations Rashmirathi, Urvashi, Parasurama ki Prateeksha, Sanskriti ka Char



Adhyay are part of national literature as well as world literature. He was awarded the 'Padma Bhushan' in 1959 and the prestigious 'Jnanpith' award in 1972. The views expressed by him in the Rajya Sabha as a nominated Member corroborate this. He was born in Simaria of Begusarai in Bihar. The Ministry of Culture is expected to declare his house a national heritage.

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

### **3. Demand to Set up a National River Rejuvenation Mechanism**

**SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN:** There is a need to set up National River Rejuvenation Mechanism for monitoring pollution mitigation efforts and rejuvenation of all polluted river stretches in the country. Despite Government's efforts to curb water pollution, the condition of our country's rivers continues to deteriorate. Our rivers continue to be polluted due to mismanagement of waste water treatment and disposal. Another contributor to river pollution is industrial effluents. With the increasing need for unpolluted and clean water, the Ministry of Jal Shakti must follow the direction of the NGT and set up the National River Rejuvenation Mechanism at the earliest.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **4. Demand to Extend the Benefit of PM Kisan Yojana and Kisan Credit Card to All Farmers**

**SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:** In the Agri- Census of 2015-16, 14.5 crore farming families were identified. But under the PM Kisan Yojana only 9 crore families are getting its benefits. Only 6.5 crore farmers have Kisan Credit Cards, through which they are able to borrow at the time of need for fertilizers, seeds, etc. I urge the Government to re-conduct census of the farming families in the country afresh so that accurate information of beneficiaries may be collected. Banks should be given clear instructions to issue Kisan Credit Cards to all the farmers.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **5. Demand for Survey by Archaeological Department and Removal of Encroachments from the Chandi Devi Temple in Meerut**

**SHRIMATI KANTA KARDAM:** I want to draw attention of this gathering to the preservation of the temple complex, Chandi Devi, one of the oldest and historical heritage of the Ramayana period and Mahabharata era in the city of Meerut. The connection of the said historical temple is one of the childhood sites of childhood of Pativrata Mandodari in the Ramayana period. The land around this temple complex has been taken over by some encroachers. Therefore, my demand to the government is that a survey should be conducted by the Department of Archeology to protect this historic site, to ensure the safety of the remaining property of this complex and the encroachers should be removed from there.

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

## **6. Demand to Provide Adequate Banking Facilities in Tribal Dominated KBK Region of Odisha**

**SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:** The tribal people across the undivided KBK region of Odisha are facing economic hardship due to severe lack of access to banks. They are not able to take full benefits of DBT schemes like MGNREGS, Mamata Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, etc. Despite an RBI order in 2014 to open branches in unbanked rural areas, no significant progress has happened in the KBK region. There is only one commercial bank branch of State Bank of India to cater to this tribal population. The sole bank branch is unable to meet the demands of the people and has inadequate staff, infrastructure, and facilities. I request the Government of India to take appropriate action to solve this crisis and open at least one bank branch in every Gram Panchayat of the country.

*(Shri Sujeet Kumar, Dr. Fauzia Khan, Shri Bhaskar Rao Nekkanti and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

## **7. Demand for Establishing Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Manipur**

**SHRI MAHARAJA SANAJAOBA LEISHEMBA:** The Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) are a group of institutions of national importance which promote high quality education in science and research activities in the country. So far, seven IISERs have been established in the entire country with an exception of North Eastern Region of India. I honestly appeal to the Government of India to support our cause in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and basic research. Till today, Manipur has no institutes of national importance of the level of IIT, IIM, etc. Therefore, I request the Government of India to establish IISER in Manipur as a special case.

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

## **8. Demand to Introduce One District One Product (ODOP) Programme as Implemented in Uttar Pradesh in Other States**

**SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI:** Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana', the Government of Uttar Pradesh has successfully used the One District One Product (ODOP) program, in which local arts of all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh have been identified and developed. Due to this program not only skill development is taking place, but also the local people are getting employment. I urge the Government of India to consider implementing a successful program like ODOP in other states as well.

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

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## STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER

### India's Vaccine Maitri Initiative

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI. S. JAISHANKAR):** Sir, I rise to apprise this august House of the progress we have made in taking forward the Vaccine Maitri Initiative. Before I share the details of the Initiative itself, I seek the indulgence of the House to explain the thinking behind it.

**Mr. Deputy Chairman,** Sir, as Indians, we are all naturally internationalist by virtue of our culture, traditions, heritage and history. We have never seen a contradiction between this internationalism and the nationalism that was the driver of our Independence struggle and subsequent endeavours at nation building. Indeed, this experience of the freedom movement has even further reinforced our internationalism by creating a strong solidarity with other nations who similarly struggled for their freedom. In recent years, as democracy struck deeper roots, we have found our own cultural expressions and identities that define us in a diverse world. In fact, drawing from our heritage, we have become even stronger voices for international cooperation and solidarity. That, of course, is most in demand at times of global stress, such as the Covid pandemic.

**Mr. Deputy Chairman,** Sir, many of us may share these sentiments and beliefs. The challenge of policy-making is to give that a practical shape. In the case of our Government, Prime Minister Modi's vision has provided an over-arching framework to make our goodwill meaningful in terms of practical initiatives and activities. We already saw that in our humanitarian assistance and disaster responses, whether in Yemen and Nepal or Mozambique and Fiji. As a result, in the last few years, India has developed a reputation of being the first and reliable responder in the region. We saw that too in critical negotiations of global importance like the Paris Agreement, where we had a key bridging role. Or indeed in the International Solar Alliance or the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, two notable initiatives envisioned by the Prime Minister. When it came to Africa, we raised the level of our cooperation very substantially at the IAFS-3

Summit in 2015. Our projects, training and presence has today spread widely across that continent. From the Caribbean to the Pacific Islands, the message has been clear that the Prime Minister of India not only has the willingness to engage them personally, but to back that up with concrete development programmes. It is this outlook of human-centric global cooperation that is the driving force of Vaccine Maitri.

Even as the Covid pandemic was in full fury, there were already demands for our pharmaceutical and medical capabilities. If we could meet them, it was largely due to the extraordinary ramp up of our Covid-related capabilities with which the House is already familiar. We are all cognizant of the low fatality rates and the high recovery rates that resulted from the Prime Minister's leadership and the Government's focused efforts. But there was an external beneficial impact of our capabilities as well. India could meet the spiking requirements of hydroxychloroquine, paracetamol and other relevant drugs across the world. In fact, we supplied 150 nations with medicines, 82 of them as grants by India. As our own production of masks, PPEs and diagnostic kits grew, we made them available to other nations as well. This generous approach, so characteristic of our culture, was also extended to the Vande Bharat Mission. Starting from Wuhan, we brought back nationals of other countries while looking after our own.

The House would, therefore, appreciate that as we contemplated the prospect of vaccination against Covid-19, a similar approach was natural. Our domestic vaccination programme started in January, 2021, and within a few days, we also started assisting our immediate neighbours.

The basis for doing so was the assurance that hon. Prime Minister gave in his virtual address to the U.N. General Assembly in September, 2020. On that occasion, he declared that India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis. We also offered to enhance cold chain and storage capacities for the delivery of vaccines. This approach is not only in keeping with our age-old tradition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, as I

have noted earlier, it is also the contemporary outlook of this Government to utilize India's growing capacities for the benefit of humankind. As a prominent nation in an increasingly multi-polar world, the international community has greater expectations of us. We, in turn, are prepared to demonstrate our willingness to shoulder greater responsibilities.

From the very beginning, India has always believed that the pandemic threatens the entire humanity and that the rightful response would be a collective one. Accordingly, even as early as 15th March, 2020, hon. Prime Minister took the initiative to hold a meeting of SAARC Heads of Government to fashion a regional solution. An important outcome was the creation of the SAARC COVID-19 Fund that supported the early exchanges on this issue within the region. We then held workshops and training courses to strengthen capacities for handling vaccines and other aspects of public health and COVID-19 management. Most recently, that was followed up by a meeting of senior health officials of the region on 18th February 2021. They shared the outcome of their deliberations with hon. Prime Minister, who urged a special visa scheme for doctors and nurses, coordinating a regional air ambulance agreement, a platform for studying data on the effectiveness of vaccines and a network for technology-assisted epidemiology for preventing future pandemics.

Our efforts, of course, went well beyond the neighbourhood when it came to online training and capability building. The Ministry of External Affairs organized 14 e-ITEC courses in partnership with premier institutions like AIIMS and PGI Chandigarh. There was even an exclusive one conducted in Bangla for Bangladeshi professionals, and one by Armed Forces Medical Services for the military doctors in South-East Asia. These 14 courses had a total of 1,131 professional participants from 47 countries.

In planning and executing Vaccine Maitri, we are naturally guided by a determination to make a difference at a difficult moment for global society. Our reputation as the 'Pharmacy of the World' has been reinforced in that process; so indeed has the faith in 'Make in India'. But more than the vaccines themselves, our policies and

conduct have emerged as a source of strength for the stressed and vulnerable nations of the world. They can see that there is, at least, one major nation that truly believes in making vaccines accessible and affordable to others in dire need.

The House should be aware that the supply of vaccines abroad is based on the assessment of adequate availability at home. This is continuously monitored and takes into account the requirements of our domestic vaccination programme as it unfolds in different phases. An empowered Committee oversees this entire process.

Quite appropriately, Vaccine Maitri began in the immediate neighbourhood, starting with the Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, as also Mauritius and Seychelles. The extended neighbourhood followed thereafter, especially the Gulf. Supplying smaller and more vulnerable nations was then the logic of reaching out to regions from Africa to the CARICOM. There are also contracts that our producers have entered into with other nations, either bilaterally or through the COVAX initiative. To date, we have supplied 'Made in India' vaccines to 72 nations across geographies.

**Sir**, the House should recognize the enormous feeling for India that our initiative has generated. Those sentiments have naturally been expressed by leaders and prominent personalities of many nations. But more than that, our Ambassadors feel every day the warmth of ordinary people across the world for India. In the truest sense, this has been people-centric diplomacy at work. The world sees not just the selfless outlook of India but also the quality of our products and capabilities. The Covid pandemic has been a test of fire for all of us. But I can confidently state that even in the midst of a global crisis, the Prime Minister's initiative of such deep friendship has raised India's standing and generated great international goodwill.

**The Hon'ble Minister, replying to the points raised by the members, said:** I take it as a great affirmation of the Make in India programme which this Government has pursued so strongly and with such great focus. All of us know the enormous efforts that the Government has made in getting the vaccine prices down. We have by

far the lowest vaccine prices in the world. And the fact is that for a lot of people, this vaccine is available. Finally, I also note the deep appreciation of Bharat Biotech and the Serum Institute. I recall questions which were raised when Covaxin came into the market. Many people perhaps don't wish to remember it now, but I am proud to say I got vaccinated with Covaxin. So, I made my statement that day.

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### **Discussion on the Working of the Ministry of Railways**

**SHRI SUJEET KUMAR initiating the discussion, said:** I thank you for giving me this opportunity to initiate the Discussion on the Working of the Ministry of Railways. We are all immensely proud of our Indian Railways, which is the fourth largest railway network in the world. This year's Union Budget has made the highest ever allocation on capital expenditure, which is Rs. 2.11 lakh crore. Bulk of this will be spent on new initiatives, on completion of vital ongoing projects and on improving passenger amenities. I welcome this increased allocation to capital expenditure. Number of accidents on rail network has sharply declined. The Indian Railways has recorded best ever safety performance. Seventy per cent of rail accidents in the country are caused due to derailments. The Standing Committee on Railways in 2016 had noted that one of the main reasons for derailment is a defect in the track. It had suggested that 4,500 km of track length should be renewed annually. However, it is a matter of concern that except for the financial year 2019-20 in none of the years have we met this target. There should not be and cannot be any compromise on safety. My second point is regarding the share of railways in total freight traffic, which has been steadily declining. NITI Aayog in 2018 had highlighted shortfall in carrying capacity and lack of price competitiveness as some of the reasons for the decline in freight share. Freight tariff should be optimized or rationalized to make it competitive. The National Rail Plan Vision document aims to enhance the share of railways in freight transportation to more than 40 per cent by 2030. This will help decongest our roads, lead to better



logistics management and boost the revenues of the Indian Railways. My third point is about the green initiatives by the Indian Railways. The Indian Railways has fixed itself a stiff target of being a net-zero emitter of carbon by 2030. India's transport sector contributes to 12 per cent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. To reduce overall emissions from transportation, the Indian Railways has committed itself to increase the amount of freight moved by it to over 40 per cent by 2030. My next point is regarding network expansion and modernization of the Indian Railways. The Railways has not been able to meet some of the key targets for expansion and modernization in recent years. The Committee for restructuring of Railways has noted that several activities are non-remunerative and impose a huge financial burden on the Railways. It has recommended that these non-remunerative activities should be separated from Railways' core business and can be outsourced to private entities. My next point is about focus and attention paid to improve connectivity in the North-East and Jammu and Kashmir. It is extremely essential from a strategic point of view. We welcome the focus of the Government to improve connectivity in our frontier and border areas. But, I would also like to highlight the gross neglect of the State of Odisha by the Railways over the years. There are six districts in Odisha without any railway connectivity. In the last seven years, the Indian Railways has given only one new railway line to Odisha. We have a railway density of only 15 in Odisha while the national average is 19. The Government of Odisha is committed to extend all help to the Ministry of Railways for implementation of railway projects. The railway density in KBK region is six. KBK region is largely tribal and largely infested with LWE. We have taken several steps to improve connectivity in KBK region. Today, the same area is called Swabhimana Anchal, the region of self respect. This is the power of connectivity. The KBK region is lacking in adequate rail connectivity. I hope that in the interest of internal security of the country, in the interest of regional balance, the hon. Minister will focus on the KBK region of Odisha and improve rail connectivity in this region.

**SHRI RAM VICHAR NETAM:** Indian Railways have played an important role in the economic development and progress of our country. With Indian Railways being a relatively inexpensive mode of transport in our country, it is the first priority of the people. Indian Railways is the third largest network in the world. Several measures have been taken from time to time to improve the financial condition of the Railways. There was an atmosphere of chaos in the country during Covid-19. In such an environment, the Railways have done a very good job. The country will always remember this work of Indian Railways. Last year, the operation of almost all passenger trains were stopped during the lockdown. Due to this, there has been a considerable reduction in the income of the railways. During the lockdown, special labour trains were run and were driven in mission mode. This work reflects a human sensation. Time-tabled parcel special train services continued even after the restoration of service of passenger trains. Our government gives top priority to rail safety. The government adopts various measures on a regular basis to ensure safety in railways. A historic budget has come for the first time in the history of the country. We can definitely say that this will lead to the development of railways. Special care has also been taken for the convenience and safety of the passengers. Work is also being done to increase the speed of trains by preparing an action plan. If we talk about the budget of 2020-21 and 2021-22 of Railways, the gross budgetary support has been increased considerably. This will facilitate the railways to complete its projects. The way in which the railway has started working by planning is commendable. The budget allocation for laying new rail lines has been increased, which is 52 per cent more than the previous year. The allocation has also been increased by 21 per cent for doubling of lines. I want to talk about Chhattisgarh. A number of railway projects are going on in Chhattisgarh. Approval may be given to Chirmiri-Barwadih line of my area. Apart from this, a railway terminal should also be provided in Chhattisgarh. In view of the increasing number of passengers, an intercity train should be run from Ambikapur to Raipur.

**SHRI NARANBHAI J. RATHWA:** Economic growth of 12 per cent in the revenue of Indian Railways is estimated for the year 2021-22 as compared to 2019-20. Several measures have been taken from time to time to improve the financial condition of the Railways. The operating ratio is considered to be the reason for the railway's losses. This situation prevails in almost all the zones of the railway. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in loss of revenue in all zones of the railways. Now the attraction of the Railway Ministry has diminished. The demands of the honorable Members are also not being met. Indian Railways have played an important role in the economic development and progress of our country. Being a relatively inexpensive mode of transport, Indian Railways have also been a favourite mode of travellers. Now trains are running by electric engines. This has also increased their speed. Today India is the fourth largest rail network in the world. Privatization has been the subject of discussion in the Indian Railways for the last seven years. I am sorry to say that the Central Government is working on disinvestment of railways and closing employment opportunities. The central government is going to abolish half of the posts in railways. After Habibganj, Jabalpur railway station will be given now on contract. Our leaders have played an important role in improving the basic infrastructure of the railways. We made railways operational with many projects but you are telling the people in the states that your government has created such a large network of railways. The achievements of the Railways for seven years are nothing compared to the last sixty years. Please do not mislead the House and the people. Today many projects are incomplete and their cost is also increasing. All such railway projects should be completed on priority basis. During the last seven years, the central government has laid more emphasis on privatization, instead of focusing on the basic infrastructure of the railways. Now, privatisation is being done by selling railway assets to the corporate sector. The Government can provide nationwide rail connectivity, but this will not be possible with the privatization of railways, as the main objective of the private sector is to earn profit. The increase in passenger fares in the railways will have the greatest impact on the common citizens and poor and

middle class passengers. There is a lack of accountability towards citizens in the private sector. The Ministry of Railways has invited private parties to run trains on 109 routes. According to the Railways, its objective is to make new technical development in the Indian Railways, so that maintenance costs can be reduced. Apart from this, the Railways claim that this will also create new job opportunities. Privatisation will cause a lot of economic problems including corruption. Reservation of poor, dalits, tribal people in railway jobs will be abolished due to privatisation. The Government should take steps to retain the jobs of these families after privatisation. In reaching agreement with the private companies, the Government should make such a provision that if the services of these companies are not satisfactory, the railway property given to them can be withdrawn. It is a matter of concern that the number of railway accidents has increased during the previous years. Most accidents are caused by human error. There is a huge shortage of drivers, technicians and other employees in the railways, which raises the question of the safety of passengers and employees. I would like to know from the Railway Minister, by when the trains that have been closed due to lockdown would be operated again and whether it is proposed to operate them again? In which places the work of Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and High Speed Rail Corridor project is going on in the country and by when will the work be completed project-wise and how much budget has been allocated for it. The Government should take necessary steps to immediately fill up the vacant posts of drivers and other employees and ensure that the railway drivers are engaged in the work that is laid down only for them. Where there is no outbreak of corona, it should be considered to restart the closed trains of the railways. The trains should be re-run for the working people, school-college going children and court-going people.

**SHRI P. WILSON:** With over 67,580 route kilometres, Indian Railways is the largest network in the world. The Congress Government mooted the nationalisation of some sectors with a view that the men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood and that the material resources of the community are so

distributed to subserve the common good. Now, you are promoting few crony capitalists in India and the entire material resources are left at their disposal, including the Railways. Privatisation of trains on some routes would result in an undue burden on the common man in the form of increased ticket fares. Private trains are to be operated by private players in 12 clusters on 109 routes by bringing in 150 trains. These routes are prime routes and prime time has been given to private players. If private players decide to carry only upper class passengers, railways will lose its revenue to a great extent. The railways are building dedicated freight corridors. The Government has announced about monetizing these corridors which result in private players running freight trains and would make huge profits. Already two train services between New Delhi and Lucknow and Mumbai and Ahmedabad are privatized through IRCTC. But, IRCTC is charging more fares as compared to Railways. Railways have made plans to privatize three loco/wagon manufacturing production units like Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli; RCF, Kapurthala; and, ICF, Perambur. Railways intend to privatize 5,500 kms of railway track this year. When the activities of the railways are privatized, the income of Indian Railways will deplete resulting in financial crisis for the Indian Railways. Catering activities were privatized nearly 2-3 decades back. Yet, there are complaints from passengers regarding catering services. So, privatization does not mean improvement in service or efficiency. The Budget does not offer much scope to expand the railway network in the State of Tamil Nadu. The total allocation for infrastructure and safety for 2021-22 in Tamil Nadu is only Rs. 2,972 crores. It is just to keep projects alive. Therefore, I would request that ample grants may be sanctioned for the projects in Tamil Nadu.

**DR. BANDA PRAKASH:** The Indian Railways is the third largest network in the world under single management. It is the world's largest passenger carrier and the fourth largest freight carrier. As regards the South-Central Railway, it has always been contributing significantly for the Indian Railways. The South-Central Railway has five Divisions. But, in the present year Budget, out of Rs. 7,220

crores, Rs. 5,812 crores are going to Andhra area. Allotting grants to the South-Central Railway and giving a major chunk of that to Andhra Pradesh, is a lot of injustice to Telangana. Telangana is contributing almost 60 per cent of the South-Central Railway revenues. A lot of coal and cement factories are under the Secunderabad area. Hence, you are getting substantial revenue from Telangana through freight charges. In the Andhra Pradesh (Reorganization) Act, the assurance was given to establish a rail coach factory in Telangana and improve rail connectivity in the State. In this regard, we have made requests a number of times to the Government. The then Home Minister, Raj Nath Singhji, had said that it will be implemented and the Government is committed to fulfill its obligations. But one RTI activist had recently sought information about its status. The answer was very surprising that no more coach factories are required by the Indian Railways, at present and in foreseeable future. So, we strongly feel that the Government is dishonouring the statutory provisions of the law of the land. A coach factory for our State was first assured by hon. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, who was the then Central Minister, in 1980. To our surprise, after 1984, it went to Punjab. No Southern State has got any factory after Independence. Earlier we had the Perambalur Railway Coach Factory. That has improved a lot. Hence, I request the Government to sanction a coach factory for Telangana. Earlier, they had sanctioned a wagon factory in 2010. Later, it was changed to POH workshop. They requested for 160 acres of land. Recently, we handed over 150 acres, by paying double compensation. We paid to farmers and also to the Endowment Department. Rs. 2 crores are allotted in this Budget. I request the hon. Minister to allocate not only those Rs. 2 crores but also the Budget you have allocated for the POH workshop. I request you to sanction a division for Vizag and also for Kazipet.

**SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE PILLI:** I would like to mention the long-pending projects in my State of Andhra Pradesh. I request the hon. Minister to allocate sufficient funds for early and speedy progress of the pending projects. There are about 11 long-pending projects, which are: New line of Macherla to Vinokonda

project. Then, Tenali-Repalle, double line project; then, Pakala-Tirupathi double line; then, Mahabubnagar to Gooty double line; Dharmavaram-Pakala double line; Singarayakonda-Kanigiri new line, and Narasapur-Machilipatnam new line and Darsi-Narasaraopeta new line. The Kakanada –Narasapuram via Kotipalli is a new line project. The construction of the bridge on the river Godavari at Kotipalli has already been started but the progress of work is very slow. So, I request the hon. Minister to review the progress of construction of this bridge and issue suitable orders to the concerned authorities for the speedy completion of the work. Then, another important pending project is to link up the Kakinada town to Samarlakota-Pithapuram main line. It is pending with the Railway Department for two decades. The Railway Department has also, in principle, agreed for this proposal. The allocation of funds is the only pending thing for this project. I request the hon. Minister to look into the matter and sanction the required funds at the earliest. Under the A.P. Reorganization Act, 2014, the Government of India had assured the people of Andhra Pradesh a new railway zone comprising of three divisions, with its Headquarters at Visakhapatnam. But there is no positive reply from the Ministry of Railways till today. In the end, I would like to thank the Indian Railways for providing services during Covid-19 pandemic. And, I, on behalf of our YSR Congress Party, support the demand for this current financial year proposed by the hon. Finance Minister.

**SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:** Earlier, the Railway budget was presented separately. But the NDA government has merged the railway budget into the main budget, due to which there is frustration and disappointment among the people. Nearly 25 million people travel by train every day. The biggest problem at this time is that all the works are being privatised in the railways, from cleaning to repairing the tracks, etc. This will result in loss of reservation to unemployed youth belonging to SC-ST and OBC categories in the railway recruitments. The valuable land of the Railways is being given to some industrialists. In this budget nothing special has been provided to Bundelkhand for trains etc. Not a single

rupee has been increased in the budget for coolie. During the Corona period, conditions of coolies, railway vendors worsened and they got frustrated and disappointed. The railways have increased the price of platform ticket to Rs 30 and the time for entering the platform and period of stopping there have been restricted, causing a lot of inconvenience to the passengers. It was announced to build a railway food park at Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh, but it has not been constructed so far. The slow pace of progress of the work on Jhansi-Khairar, Khairar-Manikpur-Bhimsen railway line needs to be accelerated. My demand is that the Sealdah-Ajmer Express be given stoppage at Fatehpur railway station and the special train running from Nagpur to Mumbai via Fatehpur be regularized. Also, Gatiman Express and Taj Express should be run upto Chitrakoot, Betwa Express should be run daily from Kanpur to Durg, Revanchal Express should be run from Delhi to Kanpur via Banda to Rewa, Tulsi Express should be run daily, Chitrakoot-Kanpur Express should be extended to Dargah Sharif Barabanki, second AC and third AC, sleeper coaches be increased in Uttar Pradesh Sampark Kranti. Delhi to Ghaziabad Passenger trains should be started. Out of service water vending machines should be repaired immediately.

**SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:** For the last almost one year, costs for reserved tickets have remain the same as were earlier, but facilities are not being provided. Trains are meant for poor people, so there should be no injustice to them. A part of Bihar's population lives in different states of the country. Therefore, you are requested to inform us about the plan to complete the pending projects of Bihar. Given the increasing privatization in the railways, what is the plan to give priority to the services of railway employees? What is the time-limit to complete doubling of railway line from Samastipur to Darbhanga and from when the trains from Samastipur to New Delhi or to other capitals are going to start? I request that 66 lakh hectares of railway land be properly utilized. Survey has been done for new railway lines at Hajipur, Bhagwanpur and Karpoorigram. When its work is going to start in this financial year? I want to know from the



hon'ble Minister the time by which the beautification of Pusa Road railway station, Karpoorigram railway station will be done.

**PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA:** Railways is not such an enterprise which can be seen from the view point of profit and loss. After the lockdown, a lot of things have been made operational, only the railways are not operating properly. The conditions of the catering staff is very miserable. Monetization is a new slogan of *aatmanirbhar* for surrender before the market. There should be an effort to avoid this. The returns from monetization should be dedicated to passenger amenities. Arrangements should be made for the rehabilitation of slums. Project sanction expenditure should be done in consultation with independent watchdog. There has been a decrease in freight loading since 2018-19. My demand from the Government is that a train - Karpoori Express - from Delhi to Samastipur, a superfast train - Chandrashekhar Express - from Delhi to Chhapra via Ballia should be run and one of the two Rajdhani trains running from Assam should be run via Saharsa. Also, the operations of GL Express should be restored.

**SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR:** Out of the Railways Budget, Rs. 1,07,100 crores is capital expenditure. The Minister of Finance has mentioned about three dedicated freight corridors in the budget which will benefit the people of my State. In spite of new capital of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati, is deprived of railway connectivity. The Central Government should take steps to develop rail and road connectivity. A new railway zone has been created with headquarters at Visakhapatnam but it has not come into full fledged operation. I urge the Government to take steps to make it fully operational very soon. The Ministry of Railways is silent on new Amaravati railway line announced in the year 2016. Tenali-Guntur doubling of railway line is still going on. Development of Guntur and New Guntur stations has also become important. Guntur station has to be given the status of capital station and has to be provided all the facilities. Mangalagiri station, also needs to be developed. The survey of Pagidipalli-Guntur railway line was completed long back. But due

to heavy traffic, it needs second line. I request the Government to sanction the second line. With these observations, I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways.

**SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:** I support the demand of running trains in the names of the respected Karpoori Thakur ji and Chandrashekhar ji. I thank all the railway employees who worked during the COVID pandemic without caring about their lives. The works which were not completed for the last thirty-forty years, by the then governments, this government is completing those works. I urge that before starting a new work, those old works should be completed which have not been completed for many years. Capital expenditure is continuously increasing. The production of locomotive engines has tripled in the last six-seven years. The common citizens of this country travel in sleeper class. We have to focus on increasing the facilities and conveniences of that category. There has been a lot of improvement in the last several years but a lot still needs to be done. There is also a need to consider increasing the number of general coaches and running of general trains. The conditions of railway toilets have improved a lot but they need further improvement. Due to Covid, numbers of trains running have been reduced and stopages at some stations have been discontinued. Due to this, there is an apprehension among the people that when the trains start running again, those railway stations will be converted to halt stations. The hon'ble Minister is requested to clear this confusion. The people of Ballia have been repeatedly demanding that the Bakulah station located there be named after Jai Prakash ji. It was announced when the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited there to attend the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Jai Prakash ji. I request that his promise be fulfilled. Also, trains running from Ghazipur to Bandra and Ghazipur to Delhi should be extended to Ballia or Chhapra. This will also benefit the people of Bihar. Doubling and electrification are very essential for the development of railways in the country. The doubling and electrification work being done in Ballia should be completed as soon as possible. The small stations in Ghazipur have not been renovated for many years and their condition

has deteriorated. I request that some work should be done at those stations too and the journeys of the labourers of the country traveling in general coaches must be taken care of.

**SHRI RAJMANI PATEL:** Indian Railways is the largest network in the world and the largest enterprise providing employment. It provides huge support to the poor. On the one hand, the government says that Indian Railways is run for the welfare of the public and not for making profit but, the Government's intention towards Indian Railways is not right. If the intention of the government is not flawed, then why are there no efforts to bail out the Railways, to raise resources and provide facilities by addressing the problems of the people? Such situations are deliberately created before the railways and public sector, which make those run into losses and then as an excuse there is a conspiracy to hand it over to private hands. Railways are not able to provide better service facilities in case of safety of passengers, other travel related services, lack of modern machines or training, due to which the burden on government funds is constantly increasing. In an attempt to reduce the passenger fare, the freight has to be increased, which has to face many difficulties. 150 railway trains and 50 railway stations are being privatized in the name of public-private partnership. The privatization of the railways in this manner will only make the capitalists rich, but on the other hand the poor and the general public will be bankrupt. In order to earn more profit, there will be an arbitrary increase in the fare, which will destroy the poor and the middle class. Private companies will run the system according to their own interests, which will cause many problems. Instead of competition, there will be monopoly of private companies. Privatization will make millions of people unemployed. Millions of posts are lying vacant in the railway department, but these are not being filled by the government. The biggest disadvantage from privatization will be that it will completely eliminate reservation of SC/ST, OBC, minority and poor class. Madhya Pradesh has been grossly neglected in the Rail Budget. No action has been taken so far regarding the railway facility of Rewa district. A new rail route should be constructed from Allahabad to

Rewa via Chak-Tyothar-Katra. New railway track should be constructed from Satna to Bhopal via Panna, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Raisen. The direct route of Mumbai, Indore, Bhopal, Sagar, Chhatarpur, Satna, Rewa, Chak, Allahabad, Delhi should be declared as national railway line. Rail route should be constructed from Mirzapur to Rewa via Chunar, Hanumana, Mauganj, Mangawa.

**SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA:** In this year's Railway Budget, there is no new project in the North-Eastern States. This Budget is "direction-less" and "pro-corporate". It could not fulfil the aspirations of the people of the North-Eastern region as well as our State Tripura. There is an urgent demand of the two localities of South Tripura district to introduce new train services in Santirbazar Sub division and Sonaichhari of Belonia Sub division, both tribal inhabited areas. It would be very much helpful for the patients intending to attend Ratanpur PHC if a halting station is set up at Sonaichhari. The people of India were hoping that the Budget will address the issue of expanding railway connectivity and take substantive measures for improving passenger amenities but on both these counts, the Budget was very disappointing. I demand that the increase in the rate of platform ticket be rolled back and it may be brought to the previous level so that the common man is not affected. The question before us is how to save Indian Railways from the economic crisis. This is a Budget to appease the rich, accentuating the problems of unemployment and rising inequality.

**SHRI SANJAY SINGH:** It was said by the government that the railway will not be privatized but it is going to run 150 private trains, is going to hand over 50 railway stations in the country to private hands. The rate of platform ticket was increased to 30 rupees, the passenger train fare was tripled. Privatization is being done in the fields of maintenance, cleaning operations, factory and production, signals, electrification. Today, two and a half million people go from one place to another through the railways, but the number of employees has been reduced from 17 lakhs to 12 lakhs. This happened due to privatization. The most dangerous motive behind privatization

in railways is the plan to gradually eliminate the reservation of SC, ST, OBC. During the lockdown, 21.6 per cent more goods were carried through the rail, which meant that the railway employees worked with full integrity and honesty. Many employees also lost their lives due to working in lockdown. But till today, the railway employees who lost their lives in the Corona period are not getting compensation. During this time people were lured in the name of running trains, 40 trains lost their way, 80 people lost their lives. Do not give the railway in private hands. It also provides employment and the poor people remain assured confident that through this they will be able to travel in cheap fares. A scheme was introduced for porters long ago that people in their families would be given jobs, this may be reconsidered.

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