

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Wednesday, March 10, 2010/Phalguna 19, 1931 (Saka)

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

I. Revelations from a document of the World Bank on not to compel the Banks for financing any project in Arunachal Pradesh

SHRI PRABHAT JHA: The way China is giving statements about Arunachal Pradesh seems to suggest as to whether we are not loosing our right over Arunachal Pradesh to claim that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India? Of late, the Minister of External Affairs has stated that India will not pressurize World Bank in respect of any project related to Arunachal Pradesh. This is like surrendering before China and becoming helpless. The series of the incidents like objecting to the Prime Minister's visit to Arunachal Pradesh by China, non receipt of A.D.B. loan for Arunachal Pradesh are making things further complicated. The Government should make its stand clear in this regard and should not surrender before any country.

(Shri Ramdas Agarwal, Shri Vijaykumar Rupani, Shri Vinay Katiyar and Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad associated.)

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

II. Situation which has arisen due to allegation of corruption involving the Government agency for the Haj pilgrimage arrangements

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Haj Committee was formed by an act passed by the Parliament in 2002 but I am very sorry to say that it is a mismanaged and failed institution. Right from the year 2002 till 2010, there has been no full-fledged Haj Committee of India.

Last year, news of 3,000 seats having been sold appeared in many newspapers. These seats arose due to the last minute cancellation of pilgrims. The convention is that the last-minute cancellation by pilgrims is to be filled-in by the waitlisted candidates. But in practice, these vacant seats are sold in Rs.25 to 40 thousands. There is rampant corruption in Haj Committee. Previously, private tour operators were involved but now a government agency is responsible of this type of corruption. I appeal to Government to do something to stop this corruption.

(Some hon'ble Members associated.)

III. Sexual harassment of children in Orissa

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: The girls, who are living in the girls' hostels managed by the Department of Welfare, are being subjected to sexual exploitation. The schools of Sewa-ashram in scheduled areas, tribal areas of Orissa are the centers of sexual exploitation and misconduct. Yesterday, we have passed Women Reservation Bill in this august house but on the other hand, the tribal girls are being raped in Orissa. I urge upon the Government to take this matter seriously and prevent such exploitation.

(Miss Anusuiya Uikay, Shrimati Maya Singh, Shri Kaptan Singh Solanki, Shri Bhagirathi Majhi, Shri Anil Madhav Dave and Shri Vijay Kumar Rupani associated.)

SPECIAL MENTIONS

I. Demand to take urgent steps to check the death of a large number of children in the country

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: UNICEF 2009 data show very high mortality rate among children in India. The alarming situation is that the causes of death are curable diseases like diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, measles and pre and post natal complications.

Malnourishment is another major cause of infant mortality. One out of every four children in the world who die under the age of one and one out of every three malnourished children is an Indian. The deaths could be minimized by promoting home based neonatal care and ensuring universal immunization. I will urge the government to take urgent steps to save Indian childhood.

II. Demand to provide adequate kerosene, sugar and foodgrains under Public Distribution System to the State of Madhya Pradesh

SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Madhya Pradesh is a tribal dominated State, where the demand of kerosene is more than the other developed states. The State is getting 52212 Kilo litres kerosene per month against its demand of 61500 Kilo litres per month. So, 9288 Kilo litres more kerosene is required to be supplied to this State. Similarly, adequate foodgrains are not being supplied to the State. The quota of sugar has also been reduced during the last two months. The Central Government is requested to supply adequate kerosene, sugar and foodgrains to this State.

III. Demand to take measures for restricting multinational company from making India the centre of drug trials

SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: The drug trials are being carried out in many big hospitals in the country without any registration. We do not have any effective institution to prevent and monitor these trials. Unfortunately, the results and factual information regarding such trials is not given to the subjects of these trials. The poor people, who are subjected to these trials, get very nominal amount, while the

mediators and hospitals take hefty amount from multinational pharmaceuticals companies. I demand from the Government to take effective steps to prevent such trials.

IV. Demand to felicitate Sachin Tendulkar by conferring on him the 'Bharat Ratna' for his achievement in Cricket

SHRI RANJITSINH VIJAYSINH MOHITE-PATIL: Sachin Tendulkar has been the greatest icon of the world cricket for almost two decades now. He displayed exemplary skills in the field and earned many credits and records in his name. He has been continuously defending country's honour over the years. So, I urge the government to bestow 'Bharat Ratna' the highest civilian honour on him.

(Shri R. C. Singh and Dr. Janardhan Waghmare associated.)

V. Demand to implement the pay structure for Gramin Dak Sevaks at par with other government employees in the country

SHRI N. R. GOVINDRAJAR : I bring to the notice of the Government about plight of Gramin Dak Sevaks who are working in rural post offices throughout the country. The demand of Gramin Dak Sevaks for their pension, retirement benefits, bonus and proper time related pay at par with other central government staffs is unheard for long time.

The Government has not paid the benefits as per the recommendations of Sixth Pay Commissions to these GDS, while other employees have been paid the benefits of Sixth Pay Commission. Despite the fact, that Gramin Dak Sevaks are the communication bridge for the rural areas, they are deprived of such benefits. I urge the Government to take necessary steps to bring them at par with other government employees.

(Shri S. Anbalagan, Shri N. Balaganga and Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi associated.)

VI. Demand to appoint the trained apprentices in the Bhilai Steel Plant on regular basis

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Bhilai Steel Plant was set up with the objective of making the country self-reliant and to provide employment to educated unemployed youths of the country. Bhilai Steel Plant had been providing training to trained apprentices for six months and appointing them as Technician Grade S-3 but the management has changed this practice since 2004 and changed the designation to STS-1 (Attendant). A number of trained apprentices have not been given regular appointment for the last ten years. I request the Government to appoint these apprentices against the vacancies caused due to voluntary and compulsory retirement in the plant so that the problem is solved.

VII. Demand to take effective measures to fight hunger and malnutrition in the country

SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: News reports during October, 2009 indicated that nearly one-third of world's hungry people live in India. Their number may rise amid global economic crisis. Nearly, 35 per cent of our population are malnourished and are uncertain about their next meal. This deprivation is worsened by economic recession and uncertain rains in India.

Brazil and China have intensified their efforts on ending hunger and achieved success also. Despite India's sustained efforts, this grim situation is going out of control. Tenth Five Year Plan had adequate budgetary allocations in this regard, but the programmes launched had either not been fully implemented or had in-built discrepancies.

Government should make dedicated efforts in conjunction with NGOs, Self-Help Groups, Panchayats etc. to undertake periodical monitoring in order to effectively overcome such obstacles and make inclusive growth a reality.

VIII. Demand to take steps to remove the miseries of jute workers in the country

SHRI R. C. SINGH : It is well known that the condition of workers working in jute industry is very pitiful and they are the victims of exploitation. In this background, the jute workers of West Bengal are on strike. Their main demands are to increase dearness allowance periodically; to pay provident fund, gratuity and also pension etc. after their retirement/death; to cover all the workers under provident fund and ESI; to provide employment card to them and make them permanent under three-partite agreement. I urge upon the Government to make efforts in this aspect so that they could get their due right at the earliest.

(Shri Rudra Narayan Pany associated.)

IX. Demand to take steps in national interest regarding bio-diversity and use of certain plants in the country

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: On 26th October, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued a notification. According to this, from now onwards, 47 types of crops/plant, 28 types of spices, 40 types of fruits, 51 types of vegetables, 24 types of flowers and perfume tree and 10 types of gardening fruits will not be in the list. For conservation of biodiversity and their use of the above articles, a law was enacted in the year 2002 aiming at equal distribution and availing their advantages. I urge upon the Government not to give up nation's interest and not to take any decision unilaterally.

(Shri Saman Pathak associated.)

X. Demand for comprehensive study of the Social, Economic and Security aspects before launching any mega Hydel Power Project in the North-Eastern Region of the country

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: A massive plan has been taken up for generating 55,000 MW power in the North-Eastern Region by setting up around 100 projects. These projects, in the highly sensitive region, could inflict irreparable damage on forest

cover, induce floods, displace people and even lead to earthquakes. Though the North-Eastern Region is resource-rich, it falls under seismically sensitive zone V. It is demanded that the construction of all mega Hydel Dams should be suspended until comprehensive studies on their socio-economic, environmental, technological and downstream impacts are completed and people are convinced of the efficacy of the steps to keep life and property in the downstream areas safe.

XI. Demand to take measures to fill-up the vacancies in the A.I.R. Regional Station at Cuddapah in Andhra Pradesh

SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY : All India Radio, Cuddapah, started in 1963 with a single transmission. It took nearly twenty years for it to become an originating station with three transmissions with staff strength of 120. At that time it started originating programmes in all spheres covering the entire Rayalaseema and became one of the popular stations in Andhra Pradesh. But, over the last few years, the staff in it came down drastically and the present sanctioned strength stands at just 29. There are only 3 Programmes Executives working at present and the remaining all the 26 posts are lying vacant. So, I request Government of India to immediately take steps to fill all vacancies in it as it is a regional station and without necessary staff it would be very difficult to transmit quality programmes, particularly for farmers.

(Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi associated).

XII. Demand to give financial assistance to the farmers of Maharashtra to compensate the damage to their crops due to heavy unseasonal rains in the State

SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Unseasonable rains that lashed many districts of Maharashtra during the last two months has caused heavy loss to the standing rabi crops, in many parts of the State. Due to this, there will be a dent in the export of cash crops such as grapes, pomegranates, alphonso mangoes and cashewnuts. The farmers have suffered huge financial loss and are in distress. They need immediate

financial assistance from the Central Government to overcome this financial distress.

I urge the Central Government to assess the loss of the farmers in Maharashtra and provide financial help to the maximum extent.

(Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi, Shri Y.P. Trivedi, Dr. Janardhan Waghmare and Shri Ranjitsinh Vijaysinh Mohite-Patil associated.)

XIII. Demand to take steps to release water from the Gandhi Sagar Dam to the canals for irrigation of Rabi Crops in some districts of Rajasthan

SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Around 2.5 lakh hectare agricultural land of Kota, Baran, Bundi district of my state are irrigated by canals of the river Chambal. The farmers of these districts have been agitating for the last one month for releasing the final installment of water but the State Government is totally ignoring their demand. The Government officers advance arguments of non-availability of water whereas electricity is being generated from the water of this barrage. At present, the first preference after drinking water is to save crops.

I, therefore, urge for initiating war level measures to save standing crops of the farmers and directing the State government to provide compensation and relief to the farmers who incurred loss on account of not releasing water.

XIV. Demand to restore quota of rice for people belonging to APL in Kerala

SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Allocation of rice for APL card holders in Kerala has been reduced from 1,13,420 MTs to 17,056 MTs against the requirement of 1,33,704 MTs. The main reason attributed by the Union Government for the cut imposed in the allocation of APL rice to the State is the decrease in the off-take figures during earlier years. But now the off-take of APL rice is almost 100 per cent.

Agricultural sector of Kerala is dominated by cash crops and production of food grains is only 15 per cent of our necessity. The cash crops produced in Kerala are contributing foreign exchange to the national exchequer. Hence, meeting the food requirement of the people of Kerala is a duty of the Central Government. Therefore, I request the Union Government to at least restore the allocation of APL rice of 1,13,420 MTs per month to Kerala.

(Shri Matilal Sarkar and Shri Prasanta Chatterjee associated.)

XV. Demand to take action regarding enacting of legislation on seeds in the country

SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: I request that the following measures should be implemented to protect the Indian poor farmers from the extreme exploitation by Monsanto and other Multi National Companies and to assist the Indian seed industries to sustain:

The Seed Bill, should be enacted in the present Budget Session of the Parliament without deleting any amendment in order to protect the economy, health and environment of India; provision of giving, the priority to ICAR in research and inventions of GM Crops should be made in the Bill itself; there should be a balance between the technology provider and technology recipient; the FDI should be restricted to 49 per cent in the Seed industry; it has to be made mandatory to the technology owner to license the technology to all the seed companies who want it; the royalty charge on technology should not exceed 5 per cent of the seed value; and the seed sector should never be allowed to be monopolized by the MNCs.

XVI. Demand to establish a separate High Court for the Tripura

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: The establishment of a separate High Court in Tripura has long been overdue. It is the second highest State of the north-eastern region in terms of population. In population structure, about 85 per cent of the population comprise of the weaker sections of the people. The Guwahati, the headquarters of High Court, is very far from the State. The State has a bench of

Guwahati High Court at Agartala. But, it is unable to cope with the growing number of litigations.

I these circumstances, I urge upon the Government to expeditiously establish a separate High Court in the State of Tripura.

(Shri Saman Pathak and Shri Rudra Narayan Pany associated.)

XVII. Demand to take suitable measures to check the incidents of disruption of rail traffic during winter season in the country

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I rise to commend the attention of this House to the recurrent annual phenomenon of disruption of rail traffic particularly north India, due to dense fog during winters. The misery of passengers was further accentuated due to indifferent attitude of railway authorities. The railway inquiry network proved to be grossly inefficient in giving correct and updated information about the trains. Furthermore, such disruptions caused stress on the railway staff involved in the running of long distance trains. Due to scarce staff, the rest hours of the drivers and guards were curtailed and they were asked to resume arduous duties.

I call upon the Government to take expeditious steps to develop the solutions indigenously or import the technology from the nations facing similar crisis. Communications system should be developed. The enquiry system should be made more efficient to give updated information. Authorities at railway stations should ready to arrange for contingencies and the passengers amenities at the stations should be enhanced.

XVIII. Demand to give approval for the construction of a dam at the confluence of five rivers in Jalaun District of Uttar Pradesh

SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI: There is a confluence of the five rivers Yamuna, Chambal, kauri, singh and pahuj called as Panchnad in district Jalaun of Uttar Pradesh. There is surplus water every year during the rainy season but flow unutilised because of non-existence of a dam. This area is dependent thoroughly on agriculture

and the people have no other alternative source of their livelihood. The Uttar Pradesh Government has limited resources. The Union Government had sanctioned the proposal of contracting a dam on the Panchnad in 1982. This project will solve the problems of both electricity and water and the problem of draught will be solved for ever in the area.

I request the Minister of Water Resources to issue necessary directive to initiate work immediately after according approval to the construction of the proposed Panchnad dam in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh.

XIX. Demand to increase the supply of Railway wagons for transportation of Salt in Gujarat

SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Presently, more than 30 lakh metric tonne stock of salt is lying in salt production zone of Gujarat and there is need of more than 100 rail wagons every month to transport the same but the Ministry of Railways is supplying only 10 to 12 railway wagon in a month.

The livelihood of all the workers associated with this industry is endangered due to non-supply of rail wagons in adequate number. I urge the Hon'ble Minister of Railway to immediately arrange for supply of more than 100 rail wagons every month regularly for the salt industry of Gujarat.

XX. Demand to discard the plan of introducing Bt. Crops in the country to protect the traditional crops and Health of people

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: I rise to urge upon the Government to relinquish the plan of introducing Bt. Brinjal or any other Bt crops in the country since it may cause great health disaster and crop genocide. GM crops are unfit for human consumption as the toxic compounds they contain are retained in the crop and would naturally affect the human body. GM fed animals have shown problems with growth, organ development and immune responsiveness. It is shocking that land once used for GM crops can

only accept GM seeds thereafter and, after three or four harvests the land will become barren.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS), 2010-11

GENERAL DISCUSSION

SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA, initiating the discussion, said :

Railway budget is an important chain of emotional unity due to a medium of the process of uniting all with the geographical integrity in the entire country. In India railway is the largest infrastructure. Since independence only eleven thousand kilometer has been increased in railway route. Unless we have no quality in the world level competitive age, we will not be able to go forward in the competition. Despite the largest rail-system, we stay no where in comparison to other countries of the world. Therefore, the infrastructure of railway will have to be made most modernised. In the decade of nineties China was lagging behind from us in respect of railway and electrification. But today it has gone many steps forward from us. The speed of electrification in our country is very slow.

In the last budget an announcement had been made about the modernization, cold storage and ladies trains. It is not known how many works out of them have been started and how many have been dumped. Regarding the announcement of world class railway stations, we can take the example of Delhi. In Delhi Commonwealth games will be held in October, 2010. It is known from the speed of its construction that it will take at least time of further two years. If such situation continues, perhaps no announcement will be going to complete. The situation of time is such that train like Rajdhani runs late by two hours. The condition of safety is such that there are robberies in the trains and people are killed.

So far as the employees are concerned, it does not seem that they are imparted required training. According to the "White Paper" of railway there has been increase in the income of freight and traffic

from year 2004 to 2009. Thereafter it is decreasing. Indian Railways is an important part of economy. It plays a vital role for construction industries. In the last five years there is a huge gap in the anticipated increase and actual increase from gross production. It is unfortunate that seventy per cent of death and injuries are occurred due to accidents at unmanned level crossings. Last time there was a mention of recruitment that watchmen will be recruited at one thousand level crossings. Through a special drive, the recruitment of watchmen is urgently required. Efforts have not been made to implement the system of signals etc. There is a lack of training for the employees of railway. There is no mention of new training institutions in the rail-budget.

A huge part of rail budget is spent on sports. But there is corruption and nepotism in this field. During the last five years railway has not prepared even a single sportsman of international level in cricket and hockey. In this budget there is no mention of increase in fare but by providing AC-III coach in place of sleeper coach of low fare one thousand crore rupees can be earned. In the same way freight is increased through back door. Therefore, unreserved general coaches should be increased.

There is no mention of the situation after the removal of the chairman of Recruitment Boards due to corruption. There is no mention of the money of penalty recovered from the people travelling without tickets. Where this money is deposited? Information about the criteria of recruitment rules of group C and D under discretionary quota of minister. Announcement of linking pilgrimages is a welcome step but excluding West Bengal rest of the areas, especially Uttar Pradesh, has been ignored.

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: It is a very good Railway Budget, which Mamataji has presented. In the area of safety and cleanliness, there cannot be any compromise. Regarding delays in running the trains, we have improved the condition. I feel that we are the most transparent democracy in the world.

We have spectacular progress in the country. We are a democracy and it will not be fair to compare India with China. Our achievements in economic arena have been spectacular and our Railways have done very well. Rail Budget is a very good Budget. Passenger fares or freight charges have not been increased. Amount has been earmarked for expansion programmes, new trains and stations up-gradation as well as industry promotion and health care. A good gesture towards women in employment has been reflected in the Budget and there would be creches for the children of women workers of the Railways. What I am worrying about is the prosperity of the Railways. It has been mentioned that the Railways will borrow money for investment and development. It is not good for the railways. It is not good for the railways. It should not take place in the next Budget. It being the greatest national assets should be very sound. It is being said that the profits of the public sector undertakings of the Railways will dip by 30 per cent. It should be insured that there should be a balanced railway development. The Railway Ministers over a period have been looking to his or her constituencies. But we have to sure that we also promote regional balanced development. Government concern should be for the people of India not for any particular region. There should be a coach factory in Srinagar as it does not have any public sector industries there. People of Kashmir have celebrated the rail development in the State much more than anything else. Trains are running there with full load and no case of ticketless travelling. Kashmir can be really on the railway map of India unless Udhampur-Kazi Gund to Baramulla rail network is made. Therefore, funding for the same should be provided therefor. In Kashmir the railways is earning a good revenue.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU : Agreeing with the former Speakers on some aspects, I would say that this Budget is a budget for some preferred States and not for India. It is a discriminatory one. The Budget has been presented without considering the performance of the Railway in each area. Even the backward areas, a very low railway network areas have not been taken into consideration. In view of the strategic importance North Eastern Frontier Railways should be

given due importance. More fund could have been provided for the neglected areas but projects have been sanctioned violating all the established principles which is objectionable. It should not be used for sheer political gains. The very purpose of development is defeated thereby and Select Committee should be constituted, therefore to decide the projects and funds to be allotted. A great deal of resentment has prevailed against sanctioning projects by the Railway Minister for her own State. South Central Railways has performed much better than other zones and the same has not been recognised in the Budget. Andhra Pradesh has the lowest rail network, yet it has got nothing. There is a general demand there that the Railway Minister should hail from Andhra Pradesh. Some new trains have been announced in the last Interim Budget but, they have not yet started. Even the train announced by Shri Lalu Prasad have not been started. This budget is quite different from those in the past. It has nothing to do with what has been said in the Vision 2020. The core aspect of this Budget is PPP as has never been witnessed in the past.

In the Vision-2020, it is proposed to expand the Railway route network at the rate of 2500 kilometres per annum. Although the Minister of Railways repeatedly exhorted the PPP mode to speed up the implementation of the infrastructural projects, she has not indicated any specific framework therefor. I want to know whether the tasks under the Vision-2020 have been approved by the Cabinet, or not. Owing to the tight financial position and in the absence of necessary budgetary support from the Ministry of Finance, most of the railway projects are going to be set up as joint-ventures or on PPP mode which has no framework. I am doubtful as to how the projects will fructify in the days to come. I ask the Railway Minister to resort to the Central financial support, and not to the loans from the private institutions. Similarly, the pieces of work, like cleaning and catering, should not be handed over to the private agencies.

The White Paper proposes to hand over the railway lands to the private agencies for different purposes. I think that the lands once handed over, cannot be taken back. It will prove very dangerous for the expansion of the Railways. As far as frequent accidents are

concerned, the reduction of budget is not tenable in this regard. The safety of Indian Railways is the most important. There is no concrete proposal to identify the main reasons behind the accidents. New trains and new lines are coming up but there is no recruitment. To avoid accidents as well as overload of work, the two lakh posts, lying vacant, should be filled up.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: The Railways, being a massive, gigantic and magnificent organization in all respects, is the second largest network in the world. It plays a very vital role in the economy of the country in terms of industrial improvement and public transports. The Railway Budget has differently been defined as innovative, positive and populist. According to Madam Jailalitha, the Budget has both plus points and grey points. There are as many as 38 items of the plus points. Most importantly, no increase has been made in respect of passenger fares and freights. It is a surplus budget. Concessions have been extended to the people accompanying cancer patients, journalists and students. On the grey side, the Annual Plan allocation has been raised to Rs.41,426 crores. This amount is very huge. For this, the budgetary support will have to be resorted to, because the surplus is very low.

I think that the projects like bottling plants, parks, sports, academy and museums are beyond the purview of the Railways. There is a need to review the manpower, the system, the order of the organization and the employees doing the job. For the management of all this, a budgetary provision is needed. Next, public money should not be used for subsidy. I want that all the services should be timely, equitable, continuous and efficient.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the Southern Railway has sent a proposal for certain projects. But the central amount given therefor is only 25 per cent. It means that 75 per cent of the projects cannot be carried out. We are lagging very much behind in BG conversion in Tamil Nadu. Next, I want that the project approved for connecting the Egmore Railway Station with the Central Railway Station, should be completed on priority basis. As far as doubling of

the railway lines is concerned, the progress is dead slow. Out of the proposed 16 world class stations, Tamil Nadu should have, at least, one. I also demand that bottling plants, diagnostic centres and corridors should also be set up there, along with the provision of electrification projects.

I request the hon'ble Minister to pay special attention to do something concrete to redress our grievances.

SHRI RANJITSINH VIJAYSINH MOHITE-PATIL: I rise to support the Railway Budget which makes the Indian Railways a truly people-friendly, socially committed and economically viable organization. The Indian Railways is the nation's lifeline with a huge workforce of 14 lakh employees and 17,000 trains carrying 18 million passengers in the network of 64,015 route kms. The Indian Railways is a harbinger of balanced development. The common man is happy because the fares and the freights have not been increased, and a lot of amenities have been provided to them. We welcome the steps taken by the Railway Minister. I strongly believe that the decision to conduct railway examinations in local languages, will provide more opportunities to the youths.

Maharashtra is known for large-scale production of agriculture and horticulture. I request the Railway Minister to consider for the construction of cargo houses and cold storages for agricultural goods in Maharashtra, especially in the districts like, Sangli, Satara and Solapur. Instead of the narrow gauge coach factory at Kurduwadi Junction, Solapur district needs a broad gauge coach factory. I request the Hon'ble Minister to fulfill the long-awaited demand of new railway lines for the Lonand-Pandharpur route. The project relating to the electrification of Gondia-Ballarshah route should also be considered seriously. The six railway stations of the State should be upgraded as ideal stations, which have been promised earlier. I again request her to help in completing the project related to Wardha Yawtnal-Nanded route, for which the State Government has already deposited 40 per cent amount of money.

SHRI R. C. SINGH: The most of the populist announcements made in last year's budget have not been fulfilled and this is going to happen this year also. This budget may only become an election budget. Steps should not be taken towards Privatisation. The whole work is said to be done in the mode of Public Private Partnership. The recommendations of Amit Mishra Committee have been accepted. Social responsibility will not be met through this. Last time it was mentioned that Thermal Power Centre will be commissioned in Agra. There is no mention of it in this budget. Special attention has not been given towards fresh efforts for raising capacity of Railways and bringing down accidents. Anti Collision Device has not been installed. More funds are needed to be given to the Railway Safety Fund.

Investment is being made in non core sectors. Attention should be given towards strengthening and extending the Railways. Only 10,419 route K.M. has been constructed during the last seven years. One lakh seventy thousand posts are vacant in Railways, no step has been taken to fill them. The drivers have to perform ten hours duty continuously. Big vendors do not leave any scope for small vendors. The Railways have to depend upon outside sources.

Overbridges and underbridges of Railways have to be constructed on priority basis. There are more than one lakh TVUs, where there is no provision for overbridges. A number of accidents take place at triangular road near Burdman station. This road has to be widened. There is no mention of merger of Burn Standard Company and Hindustan Cables. A special train has to be introduced in the name of Chitu Pandey. 'Kaifiat Train' should run from Mau. Kerala should be declared as a Terminal. Arrangements should be made in Asansol for the training of women battalion. Raniganj station should be declared as heritage of India.

SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY : South-Central Railways gets the highest earning among all the zones in the country, but the allocations are not satisfactory. The network in the South-Central Railway is also very poor. Andhra Pradesh has got only 8.2 route km.

per thousand sq. km. In the South-Central Railways, the passenger trains connectivity is also very lowest and poor. Even our representations were neglected. Step-motherly treatment is shown to the South-Central Railways. Almost six projects were given. Another proposals are surveys. The Railway Budget speech of the hon'ble Minister is only about the updating of the surveys and services to be taken up.

MMTS in Hyderabad was not announced on cost-sharing basis. The State Government is interested in this project. The pre-Budget meetings are a big farce. Our representations are not taken care of. I requested for two trains to halt at my native place but this request has yet to be sent to the Railway Board. The Board is not considering the proposals sent by the members.

SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI : This budget is a populist budget. Many new trains and projects have been allocated to West Bengal keeping in view the coming election. Rajasthan has not been taken care of. West Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are only for conducting surveys. This budget is only for the purpose of immediate view. Announcements are made but hardly fulfilled. What happened to the announcement of attaching 26 coaches to the long distance trains? Izzat scheme was announced in the last budget. The number of tickets purchased under this scheme should be disclosed.

The areas where naxalism has spread these days, if they develop and become accessible by rail, the naxalism can be tackled without problem. Some thing should be done to link all the district centres in India as it is very essential from the administrative point of view. Then only we will be able to meet the shortcoming in the scheme in Rajasthan, Western U.P., North Gujarat and Saurashtra.

The announcement made by Government will undoubtedly be fulfilled if the toll tax is imposed with regard to railway crossings. Many security related incidents have taken place in Rajasthan during last two months and the reason for the same is that the system is overstressed. Today we see that the employees are dissatisfied and the officials are taking interest in the areas from where they can get

something by forgetting their duty. Complete changes need to be done in such an environment.

The Vision 2020 cannot be fulfilled unless meaningful efforts are done. The financial targets with regard to new railway lines, doubling, electrification and gauge conversion have remained the same, but physical targets have not been met with during last 6 years. Public Private Partnership should be adopted in the field of construction. Additional resources are required to be given for the projects which are economically and commercially viable. The tasks should be accomplished within the fixed time limit on the basis of priorities. Hence, we require to adopt professional culture.

Gauge conversion is very essential. The target of 800 kms. should be further increased. If doubling is done between Bandikui and Alwar, whose return is 14 per cent, trains would run on double line from Delhi to Ahmedabad. Road transport is being used to carry the load in 60 per cent area. Railways will have to enter into this competition.

People's representatives, MPs, MLAs, and representatives of farmers should be taken into confidence while Budget is being made. Ajmer-Kota-Pushkar-Medta, Devli-Tonk Sakatpura, Baran-Shivpuri, Alwar-Palwal in Rajasthan are fully viable from economic point of view. The work for remaining 2000 kms. with regard to electrification should also be completed. It is very essential to connect Jaipur with other parts of the country through electrification. The trains with unreserved coaches should be run during day time between Barmer-Jodhpur-Agra and Ahmedabad-Delhi.

The facilities being given to the passengers is a matter of concern. The matter relating to removing the small vendors should be reconsidered. Poor people have to purchase drinking water. Therefore, public hydrants should be made as well as environment friendly Green Toilets should also be set up. It is not allowed to go to the railway stations these days in the name of security. This causes difficulties to the dependants, disabled and old people. We should

think about this problem. The number of porters should be increased and the vacant places should also be filled.

SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL : The Government should produce an Action Taken Report on all the last five Budgets and let the people in this country know whether the assurances given during the course of last five Budgets were implemented or not, and, particularly, the assurances directly connected with the common people.

Salt manufactured by Gujarat can be dispatched only by the railway. So, the Railway should provide sufficient railway rakes for the salt industry in Gujarat. The railway network is there in Gujarat from the very beginning. Nothing new has been done during the last few years.

The Railway Department has converted all meter gauge railway into broad gauge railway in Gujarat. The people suffered there because no railway facility was available as the conversion work was going on for one year and at some places for two years. Ambaji is one of the most pious places for all the Hindus all over the country. The *Teertha Sthal* of Ambaji is not connected to other parts of the country by train. My main demand is that Ambaji should be connected to Rameswaram, Kali and Pallithara. The historic places in Gujarat are not connected by broad gauge railway line. This should be done.

We are thankful to the Railway Ministry for giving some new lines in the State of Gujarat. During the last 20 years, 56 railway lines have been closed down which had been running since independence.

Forty-six railway lines which were in operation in Gujarat have been closed by the Railway Ministry during this period. As far as new railway lines which are very important for Gujarat are concerned, one such is from Patan to Bingri. I would like to have a line from Bhavnagar to Botal and a Maisana-Taranga-Ambaji line. Another major problem in Gujarat is the migration of workers. Many people from Bhavnagar, Ambreli, because of drought, have gone to

Bombay in search of their livelihood. There are a lot of trains between Bombay-Ahmadabad. But they are not taken up to Palanpur. The Railways are not taking care of these things.

As regards survey, the Government should work out for details on it. You have undertaken the work of conversion of meter gauge into broad gauge and broad gauge trains require new coaches. I would like to ask about your assessment in this regard about whole of the country. Also, there has been a demand in respect of Lumbini. Lumbini is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. People come here from all over the world. It should be connected with a direct railway track. If necessary, the Railway Minister should meet the Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs and take up the matter at the highest level in Nepal. Now, I am coming to the problems of Railway employees. When the work in the Railways has increased, the staff strength in Railways has not increased. I want that appropriate staff in class III and class IV is increased.

There was a backlog of 12,000 posts. I asked them why they were not filling up those vacancies. Under what rule they had converted the quota of promotion backlog into the direct recruitment. That conversion of promotion quota backlog into direct recruitment is an injustice to the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes. This injustice should be undone as early as possible. Gandhigram, Maninagar and Sabarmati should be selected for development. There are two common problems in Gujarat. Meter gauge should be converted into broad gauge. All services which were there in the meter gauge, may be restored for the State of Gujarat.

SHRI P. RAJEEVE: The main thrust of this Budget is also on privatization. Most of the proposals are to be started under the PPP Scheme. Hon'ble Minister has stated, in her speech that the Ministry is always in favour of Government-controlled Railways and is against privatization. The Hon'ble Minister has declared a target of 1000 Kilometer new railway line every year. I appreciate this. Now, the Government is trying to privatize railway, which is one of the prestigious institutions in our country.

I would like to congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for not increasing the passengers fare. Without increasing the passenger fare, the Railways are trying to increase its revenue by using *Tatkal System*. I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for not increasing the freight charges. But I would like to invite the attention of the Minister to the White Paper which says that freight tariff in Indian Railways is among the highest in the world. The manpower shortage is a serious problem. We do not find any proposal to fill up the vacancies in a time-bound manner.

I appreciate the Minister for extending the concession of the media persons to their minor children. You are decreasing the general seats. There is no concession even for senior citizens in Tatkal seats. There is no concession even for senior citizens in Tatkal seats. You are decreasing the general seats and increasing the Tatkal seats. It is all trying to cheat the common man and the society of our country. I would now like to raise some important points regarding my State Kerala. The prime demand of the State regarding the formation of a peninsular Railway Zone with its headquarters in Kerala is not considered by the Ministry in this Budget also. But I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister and the Minister of State, Shri E. Ahammed, for including Palaghat Coach Factory in this Budget.

I am grateful to the Minister for allowing new trains for Kerala including Duranto and Janshatabdi Express. The long-standing demand to start new trains to Bangalore from North and South part of Kerala has not been considered by the Ministry. I would like to congratulate the Minister of State from our State for having included 5 km Ernalulam-Kumbalm line in the proposed 700 kilometre New Doubling Project, that is, .0.7 per cent of this scheme. I request the Hon'ble Minister to include the State of Kerala in the Suburban Railway map of India.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: I am thankful to the Hon'ble Minister for establishing territory-level multi-specialty hospital at Guwahati and Rangapara in Assam. In her last Budget speech, the Hon'ble Minister introduced Duranto Train, the non-stop

train. According to a World Health Organization report, the highest numbers of Cancer patients in our country come from the Northeastern region. The Hon'ble Railway Minister had announced free rail travel for Cancer patients. This is a welcome move. I would request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to introduce a non-stop train from Guwahati to Mumbai, in the interest of the Cancer patients. We have been demanding the establishment of a separate Railway zone for the North-eastern region for the past several years and I would request the Hon'ble Minister to consider this proposal too. The Hon'ble Railway Minister, for the first time, announced in Railway Budget the establishment of a wagon factory at Guwahati. I congratulate the Hon'ble Minister for that. Hon'ble Railway Minister has announced that there will be a special master plan for the North-eastern region. The Finance Ministry has not increased the budgetary allocation or support for the North-eastern Council.

Hon'ble Minister Shri Ahmmed said that there are 9000 vacancies in Grade III & IV in the North-Eastern Region. The main reason of insurgency is unemployment. There is a great scope for the development of the North-Eastern Region. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister to kindly announce a special recruitment policy for the North-Eastern Region so that these Grade III & IV vacancies can be filled up by unemployed youth of the North-Eastern Region. It will send a great signal to extremists organizations. India is going to organize the Commonwealth Games this year in New Delhi. The proposal to set up Sports Academies is a welcome move. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister to kindly consider the North-Eastern Region also for Sports Academy. At least, you allocate one Sports Academy in the North-Eastern Region. Since Independence, there is no electrical railway line across the North-Eastern Region. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to kindly do electrification work in the North-Eastern Region also. Many pilgrims are coming to the Kamakhya Devi Temple every year. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister to introduce a train between Kamakhya to Sealdah and from Sealdah to Kamakhya in the interest of Kamakhya Temple.

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: This august House created history by resolving and passing Women's Reservation Bill. We breathed ourselves in glory by paying tribute to womanhood by taking a momentous decision for woman empowerment. That first concern of the Railways, should be the common person. As far as common man is concerned, he does not need AC and *Garib Rath*s. He can travel hardly in common passenger train. There should be more unreserved passenger trains for the common man doesn't want anything special except ordinary, safe, moving in a train where he can sit. If he is taken simple care of, I think he will feel satisfied. There should be more passenger trains so that he feels comfortable and he can move on. Our Hon'ble Railway Minister is a symbol of integrity and unbending rectitude. Let this percolate to all railway men. Special effort should be made that corruption is eliminated because corruption is eating into the vitals of the Railways.

Recruitment Boards were cesspool of corruption, in which much improvement has been brought forward. My third point will be security of common man. He has to face drug mafia, gangs of pickpockets, arms-running mafia, heroine-smuggling mafia. Another point is about safety of railway goods, railway tracks, and, railway bridges. 80 per cent accidents took place because of human failure. The Railway Minister has promised that within five years, all unmanned railway crossings will be manned. I hope that she will be able to keep it. She has mentioned that security is the prime responsibility of the State but RPF must shoulder it. Fourteen per cent accidents are due to collisions. We should be able to minimize that also if we have anti-collision devices, which, at present, are available in very few areas.

About punctuality, the less said the better it is. Railways should be an icon of punctuality. This year, in passenger earnings, Railways has earned less than last year. In freight, there is a slight edge. But as far as freight is concerned, the share of Railways in national freight is only 35 per cent whereas it was 89 per cent at the time of independence. Very special efforts shall have to be made because freight is the bread and butter of the Railways.

As far as laying out new railway lines is concerned, 25,000 kilometers of new railway lines are proposed to be laid in the next 10 years. It is virtually impossible, but if it happens so must be better. As far as general amenities are concerned, food is one thing with which everybody is concerned. It needs improvement. Hon'ble Minister is very keen to look after the poorest of the poor. She will percolate this message to each and every worker of the Railways in the country.

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA : The Railway Minister has mentioned about the Vision 2020. It has been mentioned in Vision 2020 that Indian Railways are an efficient customer centered and environment friendly integrated transport solution. You have neither increased the passenger fare nor the freight. Chhattisgarh is a new State and we had hoped that justice will be done to Chhattisgarh in the Railway Budget. The Chhattisgarh region provides the maximum revenue to the Ministry of Railways. Whatever you have provided in the budget estimates it seems that justice has not been done to Chhattisgarh. There are a number of places of pilgrimage in Chhattisgarh where lakhs of people visit every year. You have said that hospitals, Navodaya Vidyalayas will be constructed on the land of the Railways lying vacant. This is a very good scheme. It is good that you have rejected the idea of privatisation. Accidents occur often in the Railways. The cases of accidents remain pending. Efforts should be made for early disposal of cases. Vision 2020 is not imaginary only. 16 lakhs crores of rupees will be required to complete the Vision 2020. The entrepreneurs have a lot of money. They can invest that in the schemes of Railways. I support the Budget estimates presented by you.

SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ : Railways are a very important institution in any country, and especially, in our country, which is so diverse and large. The Budget is a pro-people, development-oriented Budget, and the hon'ble Minister has taken a very forward looking approach and laid emphasis on Public-Private Partnership initiatives for attracting investments to create infrastructure for the Railways. I also welcome her proposal of allowing the partnership of private

sector in running special freight trains. I want the Indian Railways to be very strong, very efficient and profit-making in the right sense of the term. We cannot survive in the private sector if we do not take care of our customers. There is not much difference in the cost of operation in China and India even today. We should reduce our cost further, by increasing productivity. Change will not come overnight. It will take time. But we have to decide to stop overcharging freight for goods which is inflationary and charge the right amount for the passengers. If we all want to see that the passenger does not have to pay a very high cost, let us subsidise it. It is not the responsibility of the Railways alone to subsidise the passengers. The national Government through its budget issues oil bonds and they subsidise so many other things. Let them subsidise the passenger freight. The Railways must expand, must modernise and for that they must have surplus funds. I would commend for the Railway Minister, a significant project, to make possible movement of, at least, goods if not passengers, by rail between India and Bangladesh. This will improve trade and relationship between the people of Bangladesh and the people of India.

SHRI SANJAY RAUT: A lot has been discussed on this Railway Budget. The Railway Minister has presented a popular Budget. The Recruitment Examination by the Railways will now be held in the local language and it will give justice to the people of all the States. In this Railway Budget Rs.379.70 crores have been given to the Central Railway of Mumbai under Mumbai Urban Transport Project, whereas, the Western Railways has received less amount under the scheme. This could result in holding up of all the schemes of Central Railways. The security of the local passengers of Mumbai is the biggest issue. In the year 2007, about 8000 accidents occurred on the local lines of Mumbai. Borivali in Western Railway and Kurla in Central Railway have become death traps due to the accidents where on an average 10 people are killed daily by the trains. The new rail service proposed between Akhora of Bangladesh and Agartala of India to improve the relations with Bangladesh could increase the risk. It will result in the increase in infiltration in India by Bangladeshis.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI : For the north-to-south traffic, as also for the east-to-west traffic, there are two States through which the trains pass for a very long period of time. They are Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. When you come to Maharashtra, some of the lines become *zig-zag*. The Minister should have an examination of railway lines as they are and cut out this *zig-zag* thing. In ten years, if she can construct 15000 kilometres, then those kilometres should be used primarily for shortening the time.

Discussion not concluded.

V. K. AGNIHOTRI,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in

**ERRATA TO SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE, DATED 9TH MARCH,
2010**

- Page 110 Line 4, read ‘therefore, it’ for ‘so if’
 Line 15 and 16, delete ‘The political.....them.’
 Line 27, read 'context' for 'contest'
- Page 114 Line 4, read ‘for the’ after 'brought' and 'in 1997' after
 ‘first time’
- Page 116 Line 18 and 19, read ‘years’ for ‘a year’