

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, May 07, 2015/ Vaisakha 17, 1937 (Saka)

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

I. Need to protect Fundamental Rights of Citizens Granted in the Constitution

SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI: The founders of Indian Constitution guaranteed the protection of fundamental rights of the common citizens. The people of all the religion equally contributed in our freedom movement. But now some people want to ruin the secular fabric of our society. They want to divide the society in the name of religion and want to take away the voting rights of the Muslims. The Article 325 of the Constitution ensures that no person shall be deprived of the voting rights on the grounds of religion, caste etc. Hence the voting rights of Muslims should be protected.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

II. Revival of Fertilizer Corporation of India at Sindri, Dhanbad

SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: The Sindri Fertilizer Factory, which is also known as Fertilizer Corporation of India, situated in Dhanbad District of Jharkhand and was closed down in year 2002 despite earning profits as the then Government was willing to sell it to

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

some private company. As a result thousands of employees of this Fertilizer Factory were rendered jobless and they are leading a pitiable life at present. The building and machines of this Fertilizer Factory are getting destroyed. Before every election all the parties make promises about the revival of this Unit. It is believed that the Government want to sell this factory to some private company. The people of Poorvanchal would oppose such a step of the Government.

(Shri Ali Anwar Ansari associated.)

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sindri Fertilizer Factory should be treated as heritage. It was a beginning of the public sector expansion in fertilizer sector and was a dream project for the independent India.

III. Need to create Special Category of Arjuna Awards for Differently-abled Athletes

SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE: Recently our country has lost a brilliant sportsperson Masudur Rahman Baidya, who was not only an exceptional swimmer but also an inspiration and hope for millions of people. Despite being differently-abled, he conquered the English Channel in 1997, the Strait of Gibraltar in 2001 and the Palk Strait in 2010. We demand from the Government that there should be a special category of Arjuna Awards for differently-abled athletes and sportspersons, and it should be named after Masudur Rahman Baidya.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

IV. Disinvestment of Nalco

SHRI DILIP KUMAR TIRKEY: It has been reported that Government have allowed disinvestment of 10 percent Government's stake in NALCO. We all are aware of this fact that NALCO is a profit

earning company. The question is that why Government wants to give share to private sector in a profit earning company. The employees of NALCO are opposing this decision. Odisha Government and our party are also against this anti populist step. We demand that Government should withdraw this decision immediately.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: I associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

V. Need to review All Projects Coming Up on Lake Beds in Bengaluru

SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Several commercial development is taking place in the lake beds in Bengaluru. Varthur Lake is a recent shameful example of this. This unchecked corruption by vested interests have resulted in frustrated citizens filing many PILs. Illegal construction is a huge blow for an ecosystem. No Government agency has bothered to survey these encroachments or pollution levels. I urge that the Ministry must step in to ensure that the lakes of Bengaluru do not fall victim to such commercialization. Penalty must be imposed on the culprits and strict action must be taken against negligent Officers.

(Prof. M. V. Rajeev Gowda associated.)

VI. Removal of Subsidy on Woollen Yarn Affecting Weavers

SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: The Government have removed subsidy on woollen yarn. It is affecting the lives of weavers of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. It is an injustice with the poor people. I request this Government that subsidy on woollen yarn must be restored with

immediate effect so that thousands of families can sustain their livelihood. Government should not think of their profit only. Our weavers cannot buy such a costly wool so they are sitting idle. I demand that Government should act immediately in this regard.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I feel that after agriculture, the textile sector is the second largest employment provider. In process of removal of subsidy, this sector will get destroyed. This is a larger issue. It should be taken care of.

(The entire House associated.)

VII. Recent Notice by the Government for Retired Family Pensions Against Women Dependant

SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Recently Government has issued a notice that family pension being extended to women dependants will be discontinued. These women are deprived and are subjected to economic and social exploitation. There were many schemes for skill development of women. But allocation for such schemes has also been reduced. I want to know that why Government is taking such steps? I urge upon the Government that such women should be given pension and grant in aid at enhanced rate.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

VIII. Need to implement Agricultural Diversification Scheme in the Country

DR. SANJAY SINH: Farmers of our country are reeling under natural calamities. Many of them are even committing suicides. Today everything is so costly. Farmers do not even get reasonable price for their products. I request that there is need for implementing

agricultural diversification scheme in the country so that in difficult times, farmers can earn profit by some other means like cattle breeding, fish culture and apiculture etc. The Government should formulate a scheme for this purpose. I think that implementation of such scheme will be a true tribute to farmers who have committed suicides.

(Shrimati Viplove Thakur, Shri P.L. Punia, Shri Husain Dalwai and Shri Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu associated.)

IX. Closure of Colleges under AICTE

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: AICTE under HRD ministry has ordered closure of 600 colleges which has affected at least 3 lakh students. These colleges can be directed to revise the norms, but the future of the students should not be harmed. I appeal to the HRD Ministry to cancel the order pertaining to closure of these 600 colleges.

X. Missing Vessel and Crew of MSV 'Our Lady of Vailankanny'

SHRIMATI SASIKALA PUSHPA: A vessel, 'Our Lady of Vailankanny-TNN78' with eight crew members sailing from Andaman to Car Nicobar went missing. The Coast Guard simply said that the vessel was missing. Even after four and a half months, there is no progress in rescue operations. The disaster management in this country is very poor and weak. I urge upon the Central Government to take this matter very seriously.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI), responding to the matter, said: I will convey the feelings of the hon. Member to the concerned minister.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

XI. Concern over Decreasing Lung Capacity of Children

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Lung capacity of 21 per cent children of Delhi is very poor. At the national level, 35 per cent children are fighting poor health. I urge the government to take effective steps for remedying this problem. Yoga should be prescribed in schools to relieve children of stress.

XII. Difficulties Faced by Haj Pilgrims

CHAUDHARY MUNVVAR SALEEM: I want to tell about difficulties being faced by Haj Pilgrims. Central Haj Committee discriminates with Uttar Pradesh. Hajis are asked to carry a particular brand of suitcase. The number of Hajis from Uttar Pradesh has gone down while their number from Gujarat has increased. Travel agencies with good buses should be hired for transporting Hajis from Uttar Pradesh.

XIII. Need to provide Fool Proof Security Arrangements and Adequate Infrastructure Facilities to Pilgrims of Amarnath Shrine in J&K

SHRI SANJAY RAUT: I want to draw your attention towards the statement made by Syed Ali Shah Gilani, the leader of the Hurriyat, a separatist organisation of Kashmir, since the Amarnath Yatra is going to commence very soon. Gilani has warned the State Government that the Amarnath Yatra should not go beyond one month. This is a very serious matter. The Amarnath Yatra is associated not only with the faith of Indian people but with the faith of Hindus all over world. Here, tourism is the largest profession and the Yatra will boost tourism in Kashmir and thus local people will be benefitted.

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

**The Situation Arising out of Huge Disparity in the Air Fares of
Airlines to Various Destinations in the Country**

SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: I call the attention of the Minister of Civil Aviation to the situation arising out of huge disparity in the air fares of airlines to various destinations in the country.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU PUSAPATI): Air fares are not fixed by the Government as they are determined by the interplay of market forces. Under the provision of Sub Rule (1) of Rule 135, Aircraft Rules, 1937, airlines are free to fix reasonable tariff having regard to all relevant factors, including the cost of operation, characteristic of service, reasonable profit and the generally prevailing tariff. Air fare so established by the airlines is published on their respective website under the provision of Sub Rule (2) of Rule 135, Aircraft Rule, 1937. Airline remains compliant to the regulatory provisions of Rule 135 as long as the fare charged by them does not exceed the fare established and displayed on their websites.

The domestic airline pricing runs in multiple levels which is in line with the practice followed globally. The lower fare in the fare bucket is available for advance bookings much earlier. As time lapses and date of journey approaches closer, the fare in higher side of fare bucket is made available as per the respective airline policy. Though the government does not regulate the fares that are charged, yet it ensures that considerable information is provided to the public in a transparent manner with respect to airline fares:

- (i) Air Transport Circular 05 of 2009 was issued for scheduled domestic airlines to display the airfare as per the template given in the circular, compliant to Rule 135, Aircraft Rules, 1937.
- (ii) To ensure transparency and aid the traveler, make an informed choice, DGCA vide Air Transport Circular 02 of 2010 has directed the airlines to upload fare sheet displaying

fare offered across their network. The fare sheet contains information on various levels of fares starting from the lowest to full fare offered on all sectors. This is done on a monthly basis and updated whenever there is any revision of fares.

- (iii) Air Transport Circular 03 of 2013 requires carriers to disclose all fees for optional services on 'opt-in' basis through a prominent link on their homepage.
- (iv) DGCA has set up a Tariff Monitoring Unit in 2010 that monitors airfares on certain routes selected on a random basis to ensure that the airlines do not charge airfares outside the range declared by them. Further, in terms of Rule 135 (4) of Aircraft Rules 1935, if the Director General is satisfied that any air transport has established excessive or predatory tariff or has indulged in an oligopolistic practice, he may, by order, issue directions to such air transport undertaking.
- (v) The tickets constitute prime facie evidence of the contract of carriage between Carrier and the passenger named on the ticket. However, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) vide Civil Aviation Requirements (CARs) Section 3- Air Transport Series 'M' Part-II issue 1 dated 22.5.2008 has prescribed minimum requirements for refund of ticket purchased by persons/passengers with respect to air transport undertaking including scheduled and non-scheduled operators. As per these requirements, (a) the airlines should indicate, in an unambiguous manner, the amount of refund of money admissible on cancellation of a ticket for the purpose. The amount and its break-up need to be indicated on the ticket itself, or through a separate form used for the purpose, and the policy and amount of refund shall also be displayed by the airlines on their respective websites. (b) Airlines shall necessarily return the Passenger Service Fee (PSF) collected by them from the passengers on non-utilization/ cancellation of tickets. (c) Airlines shall refund any charges such as congestion charge, fuel surcharge, etc., along with the refund of the ticket, unless these are clubbed with basic fares.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU PUSAPATI), responding to the points raised by the Members, said: I want to bring to the notice of this august House that this is, basically, a very complicated situation which does not have simplistic answers. The idea is to reach out the air travel to the common man. It is no longer elitist. There are lots of costs that go into it, and all those costs also reflect on the tickets. About forty or forty-five per cent of the costs of any airlines are fuel costs. The taxes are ranging today from one per cent to 30 per cent. So, I had written to all the hon. Chief Ministers that if they could come down with this taxation it might be helpful in the pricing. Some Chief Ministers did respond; some didn't, but it is left to them. We are happy about Air India's performance in certain places. We do take pride in certain things. Our country is a big country and, as of now, there are route dispersal guidelines given by the regulator and though other airlines are to perform a minimum of ten per cent of the category I, on category II and III routes, Air India gives us something like 23-24 per cent. Its reach in India is something that I think, any Indian will be proud of. But it is not able to service all stations. We have about 31-32 airports where you can say in the past one-and-a-half to two years there has been no aviation activity. So, it is a non-performing asset. How to deal with all these things? We had put in the public domain a draft aviation policy and we are requesting suggestions from all quarters. We are looking forward to suggestions from Members of this august House also. Of course, the Act is old, but it was amended in 1998 or 1999. If we feel it necessary one can come up with a new Act. There is no such bar on it, but if we find the need for it, we will definitely do it.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

I. The Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 2015

II. The Finance Bill, 2015

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): I move that the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2015-16, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

I also move that the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2015-16, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: In spite of global financial crisis and meltdown, India remained one of the most-favoured destinations for the foreign investors in the past. Today, there is either decline in the growth or negative growth in eight core sectors like cement, steel, refinery, natural gas etc. You have to increase the revenue and it can be increased only when industry becomes strong and economy grows faster. The Government wants to achieve eight to nine per cent economic growth, but an increase in the interest rates is not enough to control the inflation. Many projects have become sick because of the unviability and higher rates of interest. Some power projects are still incomplete and their value has gone up. There are some projects for which we need to import equipments from countries like China, Japan and others. So, if you put a ten per cent ceiling for everybody, it is irrational, impractical, and they are in great trouble.

Lakhs of people are not getting employment due to slowdown in tourism sector. The hotel projects started before the year 2013 be also made a part of the infrastructure industry. The Government must focus on how to increase the jobs and it is possible only if there is industrial growth. The State of Andhra Pradesh be accorded the Special Status at the earliest. Polavaram was declared a national project but the Government is not providing sufficient funds for its

timely completion. The 14th Finance Commission has recommended to raise the outflow of funds to the States but I doubt whether the State of Andhra Pradesh and the State of Telangana will be benefitted. Today, sugar producers are unable to pay the money to sugarcane growers because the market price of sugar is less than what they pay for sugarcane. International price also is very low, so you cannot export sugar. The Central Government should strictly implement the Ethanol blending into petrol and increase the percentage of blending as well. This is eco-friendly fuel and the environment will be cleaner. The Government must allocate some money for *Swachh Bharat*. The funds under the MPLADS should be increased. I am confident that all my colleagues will demand it. If you increase it, it will not be utilised by a Member of Parliament for his personal use. The money will be spent for rural development. The Central Government suspended the Employment Provident Fund Organisation Scheme. I demand that an order be issued immediately for release of Government contribution for it. I also request to strengthen IFCI so that it becomes useful for the industrialisation of the country.

SHRI V.P. SINGH BADNORE: India is on the threshold of an economic flight and it seems that the Finance Minister has visualised it very rightly and put all the ingredients in this Budget to trigger the economic boom and prosperity of the country. This Budget is a game-changer. There is something for everybody to take advantage of, specially the disadvantaged and the downtrodden sections. There is not just lip-service, but there is real inclusion that can also be seen. Under financial inclusion, 12.5 crore families have been financially mainstreamed in 100 days. Then, there is the coal block auction to augment resources of the States as well. Game-changing reforms on the anvil like the *Jan Dhan*, *Aadhar*, Mobile (JAM) for direct benefit etc. are there.

The Government is firm to achieve fiscal target of 3 per cent of the GDP in the coming years. The Mudra Bank will be responsible for re-financing all micro-finance institutions which are in the business of lending to such small entities of business through the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. Jan Suraksha is another scheme for creating a functional social security system for all Indians, specially

the poor and the under-privileged. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana will cover accidental death risk of Rs.2 lakh for a premium of just Rs.12 per year. It means Re.1 a month. The Atal Pension Yojana will provide a defined pension, depending on the contribution and the period of contribution. The objective of the bill is to have a stable taxation policy and a non-adversarial tax administration. The fight against the black money has to be taken forward. Efforts are to be made on various fronts to implement the GST from the next year. The SARAL form is getting a little complicated. It should be a simple form. That is what I would request the Minister to reply.

SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: There is nothing new in The Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2015 and The Finance Bill, 2015. More and more people will file their income tax if its filing process is simplified. Today only 3 percent people pay tax while 96 percent evade it. Why not think of opening a separate 'Kisan Bank' for the farmers of the country? Co-operative banking system proved a failure in north India. Farmers have lost their purchasing power. There is no provision for rural people. Tax slab for people above 80 years should be increased and simplified. States want some more benefits out of some taxes. There should be uniform taxation system across the country after implementation of GST. We are in favour of implementing GST but how will the budget deficit be curtailed?

The country wants to know about top 100 defaulters. The bank secret act should be changed. Poor defaulter of village is known to everyone but who have defaulted for crores of rupees cannot be known. We want to know that why Government are not increasing the budget for defence. Black money is being routed through Singapore inside the country. We want to ask from the Government that to what extent black money is being routed inside country through foreign countries. Government have given powers to arrest people to different agencies. Arresting the people and then sending them to jail is not a solution. Despite the existence of SEBI ponzi schemes are still running. What is Government's definite policy about ponzi schemes? How Government will the guarantee about the safety of public money in banks. I request that Government's reply should be explicit so that

the people of the country may know about decision taken by the Government.

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: I think that Government have done very little on fiscal management. Cooperative federalism is a good concept. But Government must also know what is operative federalism. Government have taken out Backward Region Grant Fund from the central funding. We urge Government to look at BRGF differently. Modernization of the police force is a national issue. So, don't leave this out of the central funding. We want that JNNURM should be extended to two years because a lot of States have existing projects left over and those projects have not been completed. On social sector schemes allocation has been decreased. I asked humbly to the Government that how come the ICDS was cut by 50 per cent. Everybody knows that one in three children in India is malnourished. Promises have been made about bringing black money back in 150 days therefore some money may come back on the ground. We are asking for what we believe is our right. Neither in the President's Address nor in the Budget nor in anything else of this Government has one line being uttered on electoral reforms. This is a huge issue and it is linked to black money.

SHRI T. RATHINAVEL: The Finance Bill is a statutory necessity to approve the Budget proposals. Drop in petroleum prices has not been fully passed on to the consumers but the Government is quick to increase the price of petroleum products. The hike will result in inflation going up further. I appeal to the Government that the proceeds of surcharge should be made shareable with the States. There are also attempts to transfer the burden of expenditure, on a number of schemes on to the States. If the State is required to take on an additional burden of expenditure on Central Government priorities, this is an unfair expectation. In Centrally-sponsored schemes, the States' share should be limited to a maximum of 25 per cent of the scheme cost. This is a huge reduction in Plan expenditure as compared to the previous two financial years. The recent attempt of the Reserve Bank of India to introduce DBT in paying interest to farmers on short-term crop loans will wean away a large chunk of farming community from farming activity and that will be disastrous for the nation at

large. I request the hon. Finance Minister that adequate funds should be made available for the Madurai-Thoothukudi and Chennai-Bangalore Corridor also. The lack of concrete measures for building confidence among the States to implement GST is disappointing.

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KASHYAP: The Finance Bill and Appropriation Bills are statutory necessity to approve the budget proposals. The actions of the Government on the issue of black money are nil while the issue of black is very important. Issue of inflation is very huge. No new provision has been made in the tax system so as people of country may feel that this move of the NDA Government is good. Senior citizens have been divided into two categories. It is not clear who will get benefit out of this. People worked as labour under MANREGA in Punjab have not received their wages even after one year. I request that payment of wages should be made. Jammu and Kashmir has suffered a loss of thousands of crores of rupees during the flood and rain of 2014. Announcement for allocation of eleven thousand rupees to the State has been made while only one thousand crore rupees has been allocated. This shows the sensitivity of the Government. There is need to do lots of things in the country.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Government's whole approach is to speed up the growth. But on which sector is this growth based on? If it is to be an employment-generating growth, it has to focus on the expansion of the domestic market. But Government's allocation pattern and the economic management, all taken together, is acting in squeezing and shrinking the domestic market. Manufacturing growth and manufacturing investment appear to be down. Big corporates are not paying back the loans. How much is the share of your giveaways to them and how much reliefs have you given to the workers and the salaried class? Government have given a lot of concessions on MAT to foreign institutional investors. Government have again deferred the GAAR for two more years, while suffering from a severe fiscal constraint, is that a logical thing to do? Government are imposing burden by increasing indirect tax revenue by cutting down the allocation on various social welfare schemes in the field of health, education, etc. Government are not

collecting the assessed tax. I would urge upon the hon. Finance Minister to kindly look into this.

Separating RBI from the Public Debt Management responsibility will not be a very good proposition. I will request the Minister to reconsider deferment of GAAR and bring it back and to permanently defer this PDMA. Sugarcane producer and the sugar industry are in great difficulty. Please, intervene in this matter. Please reconsider the remuneration to be given in Central flagship schemes, particularly Anganwadi, Mid-Day Meal and ASHA. I urge upon the Government to correct its bias against the mass population.

SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH: Entire Budget was based on the crude oil prices going down. It is my apprehension that to contain this fiscal deficit, the Government may further reduce the social sector spending which has been committed in the main Budget. To what extent will it be affected? Crude oil prices have gone down but how many times the Government has reduced the price of oil during these 10-11 months and how many times it has increased the Excise Duty? Without employment generation, growth is impossible in a country like ours. Skill will not lead to GDP growth. Agricultural growth remains a big concern for all of us. India's economy is agro-based economy. Government want growth of industry but it should not take place at the cost of agriculture or at the cost of employment opportunities for our young boys. Have Government been able to stop the black money which is there in our country in the last eleven months? In this country, only two per cent people pay tax. If Government stop BRGF scheme except Goa State, most of the districts of the country are going to be affected. Finance Minister tells us when they are going to release Phailin amount of Rs. 400 crores for a State like Odisha. This has to be released as early as possible.

***SHRIMATI THOTA SEETHARAMA LAKSHMI:**
(Spoke in Telugu).

* Synopsis of speech delivered by Hon'ble Member in Telugu will be published separately as supplement.

SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: The amendment brought by the Government in income tax is creating some problems. There is a need to bring some changes in this amendment. Government have to bring changes in Rule 37 also. Government have to take care of this. One lakh limit of expenditure without PAN card is very unreasonable and it should be four lakhs. Government have said that they have increased the share of states from 32 to 42 percent. I request the Government to bring a white paper in which department wise cuts in allocation may be shown.

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SHUMSHER K. SHERIFF,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in

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