

**RAJYA SABHA**

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**\*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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**(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)**

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**Thursday, December 8, 2022/ Agrahayana 17, 1944 (Saka)**

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**MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR**

**1. Need to Formulate Comprehensive Scheme to Implement the Recent Supreme Court Judgement and Increase Minimum EPF Pension**

**SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM:** I would like to raise a burning issue related to the EPFO Pension Scheme. Despite being one of the largest social security organizations, its coverage is limited to the organized sector. It caters to the needs of less than 10 per cent workers of the total sector. On the other hand, the unorganized and informal sector workers constitute the major chunk of our workforce. There have been a number of verdicts from Kerala High Court and Hon'ble Supreme Court, favouring an increase in pension for the workers engaged with unorganised sector. The employees having opted for EPFO membership were contributing 8.33 per cent of their actual salaries. So far, neither the Union Government nor the EPO has given a clear order on this matter. The EPFO minimum pension has been raised and fixed at Rs. 1,000. I would request that the minimum pension should be raised up to Rs. 9,000 per month. The universal coverage of EPFO to all

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

employees in the various informal and unorganized sectors should be included in the EPFO scheme.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **2. Deteriorating Condition of Jute Industry of the Country**

**SHRI P. BHATTACHARYA:** I have raised the issue about the jute industry many times in this House. I had also personally met the hon'ble Minister to address the concerns of Jute industry. It occupies an important place in the national economy of India. It is one of the major industries in the eastern region, particularly in West Bengal. Jute, generally termed as golden fibre matches the standard of safe packaging. This industry is spread across Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Tripura, Karnataka and other states. I have three important suggestions, through you, for the hon. Minister. In 1987, the Government of India had recommended to prefer jute packaging materials for certain commodities, to promote the production of raw jute and jute packaging material. But, nowadays, manufacturing of synthetic packaging is dominating the packaging industry. It shows that jute packaging is replaced with synthetic packaging industry. My earnest request to the Government is to promote jute packaging in place of synthetic packaging system.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **3. Need to Further Develop Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)**

**SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR:** The Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) happens to be the world's largest fertiliser cooperative federation based in India. It has 40,000 members. It produces dry and fluid fertilisers so that farmers get prosperous. Earlier, it was functioning under Ministry of Chemical and fertilisers. Of late, it has been handed over to Ministry of Cooperation. However, given the commercial and technical aspects, it should be under Ministry of Chemical and Fertilisers only.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**4. Protest by Fishermen at Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, for Implementation of Welfare and Rehabilitation Package as part of Construction of Vizhinjam Container Port**

**SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM:** The fishermen community in Kerala is an integral part of the society. They belong to the most backward community, but they serve the society in terms of professional and social service. They came to the rescue of thousands of people during disastrous floods. Their profession brings no remuneration for them. Many of them have reached a point of not going to the sea for the past many months. They were agitating for 140 days for their survival. They demanded a Rs.475 crore package, which was promised to them as part of construction of Vizhinjam Container Port. Now, all they ask for is that an increased rent be given because more than 400 fishermen families are forced to live in cement warehouses. Under the circumstances, their families are forced to live in places with adolescent girls and newborn babies in very inhuman and unsafe conditions. So, the matter needs a comprehensive study by an Expert Committee. The committee should include the members of their community in this process. Their legitimate demands must be attended. So far, the state government has ignored their demands. The poor fishermen have not only been inhumanly tortured but about 2000 criminal cases also have been registered against them. A special package should be declared and implemented for them, in a phased manner. Now, they have called off their strike but are facing a danger to their livelihood. Hence, the Central Government should intervene and support the State Government to implement the package and to ensure that the welfare and rehabilitation of these fishermen is done.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**5. Need to set up Public Service Commission in Puducherry**

**SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:** The Union Territory of Puducherry has no Public Service Commission as other States and Union Territories of our country have. The Public Service Commissions aim to ensure that recruitment to various posts in Group A and B categories in Government services benefits the locals. Presently, Group A and B vacancies are filled only through the Union Public Service Commission and

the recruitment test is conducted at the national level. As a result, Puducherry youth have to compete at the all-India level for a job in their own home town. Many persons from other States who get posted in Puducherry are very much reluctant to work in Puducherry and often, they resign or leave for their home States on deputation, which leads to large number of vacancies in different departments. Language is another barrier for the people who come from outside. The Vice-Principals in schools are recruited by UPSC and they are not conversant in the local Tamil language. As a result, they are not able to communicate with teachers and students and fail to assess their problems. I request the Ministry of Home Affairs to kindly consider setting up of a separate Public Service Commission in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **6. Need for Government Intervention to Protect the Basic Labour and Human Rights of Gig Workers in the Country**

**SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P:** According to the reports of the NITI Aayog, there are eight million gig workers, mainly online food delivery workers, in this country. In many parts of the country gig workers are on strike for their genuine demands. There is no law to protect the genuine interests of these gig workers and there is no provision of ESI, Provident Fund or anything related to the social security. I request the Government to take necessary steps to convene a meeting of country heads of these online platforms and there must be an initiative to protect the interests of these workers.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **7. Need to increase the CGHS reimbursement rates**

**SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR:** I wish to draw the special attention of the House towards the dire necessity of increasing the rates of reimbursement of treatment, medical tests and equipments under the Central Government Health Scheme. About two crore people, including the Members of this House, avail these facilities. These rates were fixed about eight to ten years ago. Root Canal Treatment (RCT) of the tooth costs Rs.8,000 in the market and the amount reimbursed is Rs.500 only. There are many such examples. It is the due of the Members of this House and of about two crore Government

employees and pensioners. This gross injustice needs to be contested and the Health and Finance Ministries need to revise these rates logically.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **8. Need for a Comprehensive Scheme to Implement the Recent Supreme Court Judgment on EPF and to Increase the Minimum EPF Pension**

**SHRI M. SHANMUGAM:** I want to raise the issue of 67 lakh pensioners of the Employees Pension Scheme. They are demanding enhancement of minimum pension to Rs.9,000, payment of dearness allowance along with pension, release of higher pension on actual salary as per the orders of the apex court on 04.10.2016 and 01.04.2019, and free medical treatment to all EPS-95 pensioners and their dependants. The Union Government has enhanced minimum pension to Rs.9,000 plus DA/TI for their retirees since 2016 whereas the EPS pensioners have been treated unequally and Rs.1,000 fixed minimum monthly pension has been given to them w.e.f. 01.09.2014 without any enhancement as yet. In 2013, Petition Committee of Rajya Sabha has recommended payment of Rs.3,000 minimum pension to EPS-95 pensioners plus DA/TI, but the said report has not been implemented by the Government of India even after a lapse of eight years. The Government should give the pension now as these 67 lakh pensioners are agitating on this issue.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **9. Issue of Data Hacking from AIIMS and Other Hospitals**

**SHRIMATI RANJEET RANJAN:** On November 23, a case of hacking of servers of about five data computers of AIIMS has come to the fore. It is feared that the data of about five crore patients has been hacked. There is medical information of all VIPS, former Prime Ministers, Ministers, current Prime Minister etc., medical information of all the patients is there. In the year 2021, Cyfirma warned India that the Indian Pharma companies were at risk of cyber hacking. Today, most of the hacking in the world is happening in the health sector. Our e-hospital network has also been hacked, which is very dangerous. Patients' Aadhaar card, their mobile number, their e-mail are all available in it. Accounts are linked to Aadhaar card and many times cases of bank frauds have also come to the fore. Many cyber experts

and defence experts have also said that this is a dangerous conspiracy against India. Is this a matter related to dark internet? The government needs to answer this.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **10. Issue of Inordinate Delay Leading to Grave Injustice to 11 Tribes of Darjeeling Hills**

**\*SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI:** I wish to raise the issue regarding conferring the Scheduled Tribe status upon certain communities. This very year 2022, the Union Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved of conferring the status of Scheduled Tribe upon many tribes from four states. But only tribe of Gorkha community remains deprived of this status. Whenever any question is raised on the issue of ST status, RGI says that the State Government needs to send the data. But what types of documents the RGI has collected on these eleven tribes in order to consider their cases to be listed as STs? Further, the documents sent by the State Government should also be presented to Parliament which would help the Central Government consider their cases for the inclusion in the ST list.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **11. Need to Include a Lesson on the Life of General Lachit Barphukan in Curriculum of Schools and Universities**

**SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA:** The country is today celebrating 400th birth anniversary of Mahavir Lachit Barphukan, the great leader, great army chief. In the 17th Century, India was ruled by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, while Assam was ruled by Ahom king Chakradhwaj Singha. Chakradhwaj Singha appointed Mahavir Lachit Barphukan as the army chief of Ahom kingdom. Aurangzeb sent a huge army to capture Guwahati and Assam, but under the leadership of Mahavir Lachit Barphukan, Assamese people and Ahom kingdom defeated the Mughals. History recognizes Aurangzeb and other Mughals for everything, but history failed to recognize Mahavir Lachit Barphukan. I request the Government to

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\* Spoke in Nepali.

redraft the history and include Mahavir Lachit Barphukan in the syllabus and curriculum in every Indian college and university.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **12. Problems being Faced by Farmers of Northeast Region in Exporting their Products**

**SHRI K. VANLALVENA:** Areca plantation is one of the biggest occupations of the North Eastern States since many years ago. Unfortunately, the farmers of Mizoram and Tripura could not export their own areca products to other States of India during this year. Their fresh areca production was stopped and seized by Assam Government officials along the highway within the State of Assam following the instruction given by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. In the meantime, dry areca of South East Asian countries entered India through Myanmar in a bulk quantity. This foreign areca production/smuggling must be stopped from entering our country. I request the Union Government not to confuse our own areca products with foreign dry areca products. The foreign areca product is in the form of dry but our own native product is in the form of fresh one. There is no reason to stop and seize the native areca product anywhere within Indian Union.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **13. Need to Address the Problem of Water Wastage in the Country**

**\*SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH:** The land of Punjab, the land of five rivers is becoming land without water. The situation of scarcity of water is such that in Tamil Nadu in 2019, a special train for water supply with 50 bogies was run. 10 crore people in 21 States are facing drinking water crisis. There are reports that about two lakh people are dying every year due to unavailability of clean drinking water, that by the year 2030, 40 percent of our total population would be deprived of drinking water, that by the year 2039, the ground water level in Punjab will recede upto 300 meters. 80 percent of farming in Punjab is done with ground water extracted through motors and only 20 percent is done with canal water. According to a NITI

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\* Spoke in Punjabi.

Aayog report, out of 133 blocks in Punjab, 109 blocks are in the dark zone, meaning thereby that the ground water there has gone out of reach. I would request that in order to conserve water, the Punjab Government and the farmers there should be helped so that Punjab may remain happy and prosperous.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **14. Arrest and Harassment of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy**

**SHRI VAIKO:** In Tamil Nadu, for the past 45 years, more than 800 fishermen have been killed by the Sri Lankan Navy. Our Tamil fishermen were brutally attacked and their boats and fishing trawlers were damaged and fishing nets destroyed. Now, they have started capturing the boats and put them into auction. Tamil Nadu fishermen are continuously agitating peacefully. There have been several incidents of Sri Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats. The frequent arrests and seizure of boats has shattered the livelihood of many fishermen. I would urge upon the Union Government to take urgent steps to secure the early release of all the fishermen and their boats unconditionally and also hold a high level talk to find a permanent solution to this non-stop harassment by the Sri Lankan Navy.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **15. Issue of Heavy Traffic Jam on Gorakhpur-Prayagraj Road in Jaunpur District of Uttar Pradesh due to Railway Crossing and Non-Construction of Bye-Pass Road**

**SHRIMATI SEEMA DWIVEDI:** Mungda Badshahpur railway station is situated at the only road connecting Gorakhpur to Prayagraj, and there is a great need to build a bypass next to it. The Maha Kumbh Mela is also held in Prayagraj, there is a High Court, a Medical College and a University. We also have a municipality, there are many traders too. People face a lot of problems due to heavy traffic jam there. I have raised this issue many times in the House, but the bye-pass has not been started till now.

I request that the work there may be started before the commencement of the next session.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Dr. Santanu Sen, Dr. Amar Patnaik, Dr. Fauzia Khan and Dr. John Brittas associated.)*

**16. Need to Provide Monthly Railway Tickets at Low Rate to Daily Passengers**

**DR. SANTANU SEN:** A huge number of passengers travel by railway. When Madam Mamata Banerjee was the Railway Minister, she started one project called 'Izzat' monthly season ticket by the help of which one person used to travel 100 kms. per day by spending only Rs.25 for the entire month. Now we know that major part of the rail is being privatized and the rail ticket, monthly ticket and platform ticket are becoming costly day-by-day. considering the poor section of the commuters who travel by railway every day, please start one scheme like 'Izzat' monthly, which can benefit them and by paying a small amount, they can travel a significant distance per day.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

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**WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM  
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon. Members, on my own behalf and on behalf of the hon. Members of the House, I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Members of the Parliamentary Delegation from Zimbabwe who are on a visit to India as our honoured guests. The Parliamentary Delegation from Zimbabwe arrived in India on Monday, 5th December, 2022 and are now seated in the Special Box. Besides Delhi, they shall also visit Agra on Saturday, 10th December, 2022 before their final departure from India. We wish them a happy and fruitful stay in our country. Through them, we convey our greetings and best wishes to the Members of the Parliament, the Government and the friendly people of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

## GOVERNMENT BILL

### **The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022- *Contd.***

**SHRI RAKESH SINHA** continuing his unfinished speech dated **07.12.2022, said:** Invasive species like lantana and Prosopis Juliflora have changed the entire ecology in Karnataka and Kutch respectively and the lifestyle of the pastoral tribes of those regions has completely changed. We have neglected this important subject for too long. This amendment bill is being brought very thoughtfully and its aim is to save the country's economy and environment. 64 species of birds are on the verge of extinction in Kerala. There also some animals have become extinct because of some invasive species. These threats are on the rise for three important reasons. The first reason is that the countries like China, Vietnam, Myanmar etc. use parts of animals in their traditional medicines, due to which wildlife trafficking is increasing. The second major reason is related to ornamental fishes and species, whose trafficking has been done unscientifically. Because of this many species of fishes, star turtle have reached the verge of extinction. India's position in wildlife trafficking is second only to America. The third reason is personal mistakes, like a person brought Giant African Snail from Mauritius only out of curiosity but now its quantity has increased so much in Kerala and Assam that the crops are getting destroyed there and the farmers are facing problem. For these reasons, I want to say that today the whole country needs such a strict law and since everyone's responsibility is nobody's responsibility, the Central Government is taking this responsibility upon itself. The North East is one of the most developed centres of biodiversity in the world. 106 species are on the verge of extinction in the North East. The reason for this is that we did not do any scientific survey about these things, neither paid attention to their decreasing number, nor paid attention to its reasons and left everything to nature. In the end, I want to tell that this law will have three benefits. First, the costs associated with the management and control of wildlife trafficking and invasive species would be saved. In this way our economy will benefit. The balance of ecology will be maintained and thirdly, the sale of invasive species from foreign countries and smuggling of wildlife will be stopped. Please do not oppose such such law, such amendment in the name of federalism, opposing which threatens the very existence of this country.

**SHRI PRAFUL PATEL:** Today we are discussing a bill whose need is felt by all of us. We may have different suggestions on some aspects, but we have no differences with its basic objective. Somewhere the balance between environment and development has to be maintained. We always talk about the protection of wild animals. It is the need of the hour and also necessary for the environment. But, now-a-days human-animal conflicts are increasing a lot. We also need to think about its reasons. Earlier, when we went to the forest areas, many animals, grazing animals were seen, which used to work as food for the hunting animals. Now we don't see them in that number. That's why hunting animals are coming out of the forest and making pets or children their prey. I request you to pay a lot of attention to this. Secondly, we stop the work on the roads or national highways where forest areas come in between. Naturally, it is okay that it is a matter of environment, but make a common policy, a policy that if the National Highway passes through a forest area, then how should wire ducts be made there or how should underpasses be made so that the work does not stop. My third and final request is that due to the different nomenclatures in different states, the same forest area is a degraded forest in one state and a revenue forest in the other. Building of a village school or any other development work is not possible in the former state while in the later, even the court and the assembly have been built in that forest area. Make a comprehensive policy for this too, in which the environment, the forest areas are also taken care of and some way of development is also found.

**SHRI KUMAR KETKAR:** I welcome this Amendment Bill, but let us not forget that there is a tendency these days to forget the legacy of such very important Act. At present, when we are talking here about this Act, Nicobar jungles are being completely ruined and removed for the benefit of some corporates. Not only the law should be strict, but its implementation should also be strict, but its strict implementation is not happening. Corporates are actually using their money power or muscle power or their contacts, in the bureaucracy and in the Government, to destroy jungles. Another thing is that, jungles and human habitats are closely linked and related; one without the other is not possible. Climate change is directly concerned with the protection of wildlife, protection of birds and creating environment for them. We are actually ruining the flora and fauna and I don't think we particularly care about it. I don't see any discussion. For instance,

you talk about bio-diversity, but I think only one university has just started a bio-diversity subject, but otherwise, most universities ignore bio-diversity subject completely. As a result, the youth or the students or the academicians generally do not have any knowledge of the necessity of wildlife connected with climate change. The implementation of wildlife protection will begin from the education sector, university sector, school sector. Wildlife cannot be promoted merely by creating Acts. Another point that I must mention here is, the number of species declining in India has crossed 30,000. Protection of species will happen only if the Government is serious and strict about implementing this. Development is possible even without destroying ecological balance, but Ecology is sacrificed in the name of development. It is necessary to protect Adivasis and jungles and wildlife together because they live together and they don't live separately.

**MS. INDU BALA GOSWAMI:** Humans, animals and plants depend on each other. That's why it is the main responsibility of humans to protect water, forest and animals. Extinction of plants and animals in the environment has a direct effect on the existence of human life, because human life and the happiness and prosperity associated with that life is obtained only from plants and animals. Many species are on the verge of extinction or have become extinct due to human activities. The environment has been greatly affected by the fulfillment of human comforts. Global warming has increased, forests are disappearing, pastures are disappearing, many species of flora and fauna have either become extinct or are on the verge of extinction because humans are not only using them for their own needs but is also indulging in illegal trade and smuggling thereof for his personal gains. Saving endangered species is a very important responsibility of the world community. There was a huge decrease in the number of vultures in my state in 1990, but due to the continuous efforts of the Forest Department, today the number of vultures has increased in the state. Himachal Pradesh's first Biodiversity Park is being prepared, which upon its becoming functional will protect the endangered herbs, especially the endangered herbs of the Himalayas. Herbs are used for health benefits, but today they are on the verge of extinction due to illegal trade. Himachal Pradesh plays a very important role in preserving the nature, and 68 percent part of the state is forest area. That's why I understand the importance of this Bill. The concept of conservation of forests and fauna has always been a part

of our ancient culture and heritage. Our Government has shown determination to make India a responsible and climate-resilient economy. This Bill is an important step in that direction. The government is working towards wildlife conservation, under which conservation of at least 22 wildlife has been included in programs like Project Elephant, Vulture Conservation Action Plan, Project Dolphin, National Sea Turtle Action Plan, Project Snow Leopard etc. Wildlife is related to human life and its comforts, so there is a need to make strict rules and regulations to keep them safe. With the passage of time there was a need to amend the Act of 1972 . The present amendment makes changes to the preamble of The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Along with the protection of wildlife, their safety and management have also been included in the new Bill. The Bill not only fulfills India's commitment to the provisions of CITES, but also covers all aspects of wildlife conservation, protection and management in the country. Under the proposed Bill, only the Central Government shall have the right to take the decision regarding import and trade, safety or increasing the number of invasive species, that is, species that are not native to India or whose spread was threatening wildlife in India, harming the economy and causing damage to the environment. The penalty amount has been increased for violating the rules and bye-laws given in the Bill. This will definitely check their illegal trade or smuggling. Today, India is leading the whole world in the fight for environmental protection. With the enactment of this Bill, we will be at the forefront of the fight to save the ecosystem of our planet, the Earth.

**MS. SUSHMITA DEV:** My party has given me an opportunity to speak on a very important Bill, that is, the Wild Life Protection (Amendment) Bill. The thrust of this Bill is in the number of Schedules that have been included. Certain Bills require very much expertise and the present Bill is also one such Bill. The Standing Committee have heard a number of activists, environmentalists, experts and, then, given their suggestions on this Bill. We are amongst the 184 countries that have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1975. This Bill is absolutely necessary to bring our current laws in line with our international obligations under that treaty. Had this amendment been brought through the Biological Diversity Act, then I believe that it would have been far more streamlined. No one can oppose this Bill because we all agree on

sustainable exploitation of our flora and fauna. One of the key amendments that has been brought is to have two authorities, one being the management authority and one being the scientific authority. They will regulate the trade of these species and at the same time ensure that the level of the trade doesn't go to such an extent that it becomes detrimental to any species. But I do feel that in the composition of these two authorities, one must remember that this is a subject that is in the Concurrent List, and, therefore, the States must have a significant say in how it is implemented. Many Members, not just me, have repeatedly raised the concern about the way Section 43 has been amended. Section 43 of the principal Act has been amended and this is not a concern of Parliamentarians or Members of the Standing Committee but this is a concern of people who have been fighting for decades for the protection of captive animals like the elephants. The wild elephant in this country comes under 'captive animals' It has been declared as a heritage animal. Clause 27 of the Bill is a direct contravention of the earlier Section 43. The government has come up with an amendment completely contrary to the recommendation of the Standing Committee.

**SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH:** I rise to oppose the Wild Life (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in its present form. The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 is an important landmark because this Act was passed by Parliament when wild life was in the State List of the Constitution. Following the Parliament passing this law, eleven States enacted their own laws in consonance with Parliament's law and subsequently all States began adopting this national legislation. The Act has protected the lions, tigers, elephants, ghariyals, rhinoceros etc. It has protected a large number of birds and a large number of species. It is ironic that a Minister, whose recommendations are accepted, is refusing to accept the important recommendations of the Standing Committee. The recommendation of the Standing Committee on Schedule-I, Schedule-II and Schedule-III have been accepted. The format suggested by the Standing Committee has been followed. I wish to compliment the Minister on dropping the most dangerous provision in the Original Bill. Clause 27 was the most dangerous provision which he has dropped in consonance with the recommendations of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee's recommendation on redrafting this clause 27 has been accepted. There is a conflict of interest. Elephant is not only a natural but also a national heritage mammal of India. We know the

cultural and religious significance of the elephant in many States of India. The Standing Committee accepted the religious significance of elephant. But the Bill adds "or any other purpose". What is this "any other purpose"? I requested for dropping of "any other purpose" words. But my request was not accepted and "any other purpose" words have been kept in the Bill. I want to request the Minister, please drop the words 'any other purpose' from the Bill. If you have 'any other purpose' in mind, put it into the Bill and take the House into confidence. I will talk about the State Board on Wildlife the Minister has done in the Bill is that he has made the State Board on Wildlife a rubber stamp machine. Today, the State Board on Wildlife is chaired by the Chief Minister. At least, the Chief Minister, twice a year, pays attention to the problems of the wildlife. This Bill says that you can have a Standing Committee chaired by the Minister, who will be the Vice-Chairman, and you will have ten Members. We know that these ten Members will be Secretary (Forest), Secretary (Environment), Secretary (Finance), Secretary (Culture), etc. All these will be the people who will say yes. So, please preserve the integrity and independence of the State Board on wildlife and bring some institutional Members, bring some scientists, bring some conservationists, bring some outsiders who will give you a different point of view. I cannot support the Bill in its present form. I support the two points on which Mr. Bhupender Yadav has agreed to the Report of the Standing Committee.

**DR. M. THAMBIDURAI:** I am supporting this Bill. The hon. Minister has brought the Bill after referring it to the Standing Committee. The observations made by the Standing Committee have also been taken into consideration and now he has brought the Bill. Many innocent human beings have been killed by the elephants moving around. Also, the elephants are destroying the crops in the field. Who is going to give the compensation for that? For that, the wild animals, elephants have to be kept in the forest so that they do not enter the human habitats. People are suffering due to this. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to see as to how you can protect the human beings. Apart from the animals, you have to protect the human beings. All are important.

**SHRI ABDUL WAHAB:** My first feeling was to support this Bill. But now Mr. Jairam Ramesh is opposing it. I am in the middle now. I have got only one request. that you will do some justice to us junglewala. I come

from Nilambur foothills of Nilgiri. Every day we are facing elephant attack in my house. I request you to give fund to our Government to have hanging solar fence.

**SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA:** I rise here today to support the Bill. Animal protection is the call of the hour. Similarly, global warming, climate change, and forest protection are the call of the hour. In many parts of our country, forest are being destroyed like anything. Without forests, we cannot live. Recently three elephants were killed near Guwahati while crossing the railway track in Elephant Corridor. So, I will request the Minister to look into it and discuss this situation with the Railway Minister to protect the elephants. Lower Subansiri project construction is going on in Arunachal Pradesh. Its construction is going on in the elephant corridor. I am not against the dam but protection of elephants is also important. Due to Lower Subansiri dam, the dolphin park is also going to be put to damage. So, again, I would like to make an appeal to the Government to look after these things. Nowadays, elephants lack food. Elephants are facing a lot of problems due to lack of feed in forest regions. Sufficient funds should be provided to protect the elephants.

**SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA:** Although it is my first speech, I will conclude in 6-7 minutes. Yes, I do support this Bill. The proposal to amend the Act has covered a variety of topics -- starting from the preamble to establishing a mechanism for regulating export and import of endangered species in India. I earnestly believe that this Bill will ensure protection of not only endangered flora and fauna but also of the tribal communities that live around our forests. This legislation will also help efficiently regulate many economic activities revolving around biodiversity. The preamble of the Act proposes to include event management, conservation along with the protection of the wildlife. The preamble itself can be expected to lay the foundation for a strong law to protect this country's biodiversity. I, wholeheartedly, support the Bill and call for the reforms in the conservation of biodiversity to ensure that the number of endangered species in India keep on growing and help us to maintain biodiversity in full glory.

**SHRI RWNGWRA NARZARY:** I must appreciate some of the highlights of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022. The Bill has now reduced the schedules to four from earlier six schedules which will help

in proper management and implementation of the Act. It inserts a new Schedule-IV for specimens listed in the appendices under CITES (scheduled specimens). The Convention requires countries to regulate the trade of all listed specimens through permits. It also seeks to regulate the possession of live animal specimens. The recent Amendment has taken a progressive step to foster the participation of forest dwellers within national parks while determining the management plan. It has mandated the need to consult the Gram Sabha in protected areas falling under scheduled areas or areas recognized to possess forest rights based on claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The step of allowing activities like grazing or movement of livestock, bona fide use of drinking water and household water by local communities, etc., is a very welcome step. As the tribal people surrounding the wildlife areas are very poor and struggles a lot to meet their basic needs. I want to mention about regulation of transfer of animal. There are enough number of elephants in captivity. So it is very important to create more checks and balances for management and transfers. The transfer of captive/live elephant is specially considered in this amendment. I conclude by supporting the Amendments in the Bill, which are very much needed to strengthen the conservation of our precious wildlife and their habitat.

**SHRI KAMAKHYA PRASAD TASA:** Forests, grassland, animals, birds, plants, all these have been included in a bill and a lot of work has to be done for their protection. I am saying this with great sadness that there are many offices of the Forest Department in the state. Forest department is there in every state, but despite having state forest department, the size of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks is decreasing. It is surprising that all the big trees that were there have been cut down and most of the wildlife sanctuaries or forests have been cleared. There were a lot of trees in Nagaland, they have now disappeared due to cutting. In Assam too they have been completely destroyed. I thank the officers, especially Honorable Minister Bhupendra ji has definitely done a good job, which has forced everyone to think about wildlife. The whole assembly is busy with it and is also discussing it. Most of the trees in the wildlife sanctuary were cut. All the orchids, all the medicinal plants were gone. In most places the big lizards and owls are being smuggled. Now the conflict between humans and elephants has become too much. We should also worry about how to displace elephants from such small places to large forests. I request the House to see this. Because of this

every day man is dying and elephant is also getting injured. Due to this the production has decreased, because the elephant destroys the crop. I request him to arrange strictest punishment for the people involved in smuggling to protect flora and fauna. I would especially request you to pay attention to the North-East as there are a lot of sanctuaries there.

**SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:** We all should support the bill, but there are some concerns in it, which I want to convey to the Minister through you. Firstly, there has been a title change. It says that protection, conservation and management of wildlife will be written instead of protection of wildlife, birds and plants. When we talk about management, conservation, protection and preservation, first of all we have to introspect that whatever objectives we want to follow, implement through CITS, are we creating that through this bill? Climate change has become a very important topic. Jairam Ramesh ji said a very important thing that National Wildlife Board, State Wildlife Board is being diluted. National Wildlife Board used to be a board of 15 people, it has been reduced to 3 people. In the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project, more than 4 thousand hectare Panna Tiger Reserve is being destroyed, and there is no discussion on it. 53,000 valuable mango trees are to be cut for the bullet train project. Everyone believes that the bullet train project is a vanity project, but it is causing degradation of our environment. If we talk about wild life protection, conservation, then it will be harmful for that. These are important issues. If we talk about conservation, protection, preservation, keeping all these things in mind, its responsibility rests with the Ministry of Environment. I hope that the anomalies pointed out by everyone will be taken note of and rectified.

**SHRI SHAMBHU SHARAN PATEL:** I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Bill. As much protection as humans get from the government to live, the same protection should be given to speechless creatures. India is the only country in the world where animals and birds are worshiped along with God, so they too have the right to live according to their nature. If there are no forests and animals and birds, then the eco-system of nature will become unbalanced. Rules have been made for the protection of wildlife in the Constitution of India. Conservation and protection of wildlife in India can be seen under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. With the introduction of the Wildlife

Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2021, animals and birds, forests and the tribal community living in forests will get more protection, their rights will be more protected, that will help in reducing the situation of imbalance that has arisen in the environment, deforestation will stop, the situation of conflict between humans and wild animals will also decrease. Smuggling of banned woods will also reduce.

**SHRI SANJAY SINGH:** Through this Bill, an attempt is being made to encroach upon the federal structure of India and the rights of the State Government. There is a forest department in the states and it is carrying out the responsibility of wildlife conservation very efficiently. Many states have state boards for wildlife protection, headed by the chief minister, who is personally involved in the decision-making process of the board. Hon'ble Prime Minister has made a very good effort. I want to congratulate the Prime Minister and this Government. You brought leopard and the whole country welcomed it. But there should also be a plan for the displacement of the tribals living there, who are evicted from their land.

**SHRIMATI SEEMA DWIVEDI:** I rise to speak in support of this Bill. The 'Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022' brought up by the government is a significant and meaningful step towards the country's environment including people and the whole flora and fauna. We used to see colorful birds around us three decades ago, but they are now rarely seen. This means that their protection has diminished over time. This Bill will curb the crimes perpetrated on wild animals. Where have our butterflies, vultures, sparrows and crows gone? Vultures are scavengers and they help in keeping the environment clean by consuming up the carcass of animals. Today there is a great shortage of them. That is why our government has come up with this bill. The Government of India is enacting such a law under which everyone should do their work and our wild animals will continue to be protected and their species will continue to grow. Sometimes some migratory species from outside come to our country. If there is any danger from them, then an effective way to stop it is also being built into this Bill. All of us should unanimously support this Bill.

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE; AND THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV), replying to the discussion, said:** First of all, I express my gratitude to all the Members that they have given their consent on such a crucial and sensitive subject. Whenever we go anywhere in the world for environmental talks, we always have to tell all the countries of the world that our forests are different from other countries in terms of biodiversity, culture, way of life, etc. The ancient knowledge that India gained in the form of Upanishads and Vedas were composed in the forest. Therefore, it is also important to protect the rights of our people who have been living in forest area for a long time. We also rehabilitated in Kuno sanctuary, and did not displace anyone. I would also like to specially thank the Standing Committee of the House. Whenever the bill goes before the Standing Committee or the Select Committee, we get some valuable suggestions which is necessary. Our constitution is a dynamic constitution. This House, under this government, made a historic law like GST, in which the State Legislative Assemblies and the Central Parliament gave their power to a GST Council and changed the country's federalism, which is cooperative and friendly federalism and motivated the country to convert cooperation into participation. So, if we want to give more powers to the states, then what is your objection? When the people of the country are electing them, then you should not distrust the wisdom of people of the country. Did the people of the country not elect their public representative by making full use of their intellect and did not hand over power to one party? We have enabled the states to take more decisions, which strengthens federalism. In this House, I also want to assure that whatever law is made on this subject, we will do it according to all the provisions of the Act regarding complete conservation of elephants. I want to emphasise that our core concern is conservation of wildlife and local communities. Whenever we hold any meeting on wildlife with the forest officials, we first see the prey area. It is a given that only when there are tigers, lions, panthers and so on, will there be a cyclic balance in the forest. If all the wild animals remain in the forest, only then there will be balance there. This is the principle of nature. We should maintain its system keeping that in mind. Our officers are fully engaged in that. I strongly believe that the

State Governments should take decisions and formulate policies applying their wisdom speedily in favor of the poor people.

We have diverted less forests and focussed on the development of the country more. We have tried to live up to our commitment to increase the green cover in the country. The biggest thing is that the more you go to the forest area, the more you get the opportunity to learn about Nature. We have developed the design in such a way that our entire flora and fauna is not disturbed. Jallikattu is certainly one of the cultural traditions and part of Tamil Nadu. There are also court decisions regarding that. We believe that the decisions should also be followed in this and along with that, the tradition and culture should also be maintained. In the 75th year of India's independence, 75 wetlands of the country are now in our Ramsar sites, which is a matter of pride for all.

*The motion for consideration of the Bill was adopted.*

*Clauses etc., were adopted.*

*The Bill was passed.*

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**P. C. MODY,**  
*Secretary-General.*

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