

**RAJYA SABHA**

**\*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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

**Wednesday, August 02, 2023/ Sravana 11, 1945 (Saka)**

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

**1. Demand to Grant Autonomous status to Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada**

**\*SHRI IRANNA KADADI:** The Kannada language has a glorious history and is spoken by more than 6 crore people as their mother tongue. It is one of the Classical languages of India. Its literature has received many prestigious Awards. In 2011, Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada was established in Central Institute of Indian Languages at Mysuru for the development of Kannada language and to encourage research work in it. However, it has not received the autonomy it deserves. By according the autonomy to it, there will be multifold development and an increase in the number of books and literary activities in Kannada language. I request the Government and the Education Ministry to do the needful in this regard and allocate funds for the development of Kannada language.

*(Dr. Amar Patnaik, Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

**2. Need to Regulate OTT Platform for Obscene and Vulgar Content**

**SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI:** The serials, shown on OTT platforms glorify violence, obscenity, vulgarity, abusive language and drugs in such a way that it is difficult to sit and watch them with the family. Big actors of the country are working in these serials. Their market is growing rapidly, they also do their own rating, while this work should be done by an expert panel. I urge the government to put in place a regulatory framework to regulate the content shown on these OTT platforms, just like movies and cable television.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

**3. Need to open Repertory Units on "Prahallada Natak" and "Ghoomura Dance" in the districts of Ganjam and Kalahandi in Odisha**

**SHRI MANAS RANJAN MANGARAJ:** Odisha is a culturally rich State and folk art and folk dance are an integral part of its ancient culture. But due to negligence on the part of the Government and fading popularity after the advent of electronic media, folk dance forms such as "Ghoomura Dance" of Kalahandi district and "Prahallada Nataka" of Ganjam district are on the verge of extinction and the plight of the artists of these art forms are becoming worse day-by-day. I request to the Government to set up repertoire units for

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

**\*Spoke in Kannada.**

the protection and promotion of above mentioned art forms and their artistes in Kalahandi and Ganjam districts.

*(Shrimati Sulata Deo, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Sujeet Kumar, Dr. Amar Patnaik and Shrimati Mamata Mohanta associated)*

#### **4. Need to use Hot Dip Galvanized TMT Bar in all Infrastructure Development Projects**

**DR. ANIL SUKHDEORAO BONDE:** India suffers huge economic losses every year due to the use of iron in the construction of infrastructure facilities. The reason for this is rusting of iron which can never be repaired and once started the process of rusting cannot be stopped. Because of this, cracks appear in the concrete and roads and bridges become weak. Corrosion prevention measures include the use of stainless steel, epoxy coating and use of galvanized steel. Stainless steel costs a lot and epoxy coating is not as effective. Therefore, hot dip galvanized TMT bars are the most efficient way to prevent corrosion. Galvanization is a process carried out at 460 °C that forms an alloy of steel and zinc and increases the life of iron by three to five times. It does not rust even after being kept in an open warehouse for years. The cost of galvanization is not more than Rs.16 per kg. It is also easy to bend, weld or cut. It remains durable even in any weather condition or open environment, so I urge the Government to use only galvanized steel in the construction of infrastructure.

#### **5. Need for making Provisions under Arms Act for giving License to Businessmen dealing in Gold, Silver and Diamond**

**SHRI KAILASH SONI:** Not a week goes by without one or the other bullion trader being murdered or looted. Such incidents are happening with them in all the States of India. I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India through you that for the safety of their lives and their property, a provision should be made in the Arms Act that they should be liberally given arms licenses within a time limit.

*(Dr. Ashok Bajpai, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

#### **6. Need to provide Special Focus State status to Odisha**

**DR. SASMIT PATRA:** The State of Odisha has always been facing natural calamities. In the last 100 years, we have witnessed about 99 cyclones, due to which our state, Odisha, has suffered a lot. The damage caused to livestock and infrastructure takes a long time to recover. That is why it has been demanded time and again that Odisha and other States like Odisha be given the status of Special Focus States. The Centre-State sharing pattern of any program is either 60:40 or 50:50. Whenever there is a natural calamity, you change the sharing ratio from 60:40 to 90:10 for a period of three years. For three years, 90 percent shall be given by the Center and 10 percent by the State government, and after three years this sharing pattern can be revoked. This will give the State time to recover from that disaster and there will be no pressure on the central government to provide any additional assistance.

*(Shri Sujeet Kumar and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

#### **7. Need to improve Digital Infrastructure and All-Round Connectivity in Rural Areas of Odisha**

**DR. AMAR PATNAIK:** There are four critical areas where infrastructural intervention is required for development of any region. These are Roads, Railways, Banking services, and digital services. In Odisha, 32 National Highway projects are lagging in completion. The hon'ble Minister had promised to get all this completed by mid-

2023 but not much progress has yet been made. Fourteen new State roads, which were already declared in principle, to be converted into National Highways, have also not been announced. This is an area where the Government of India is requested to make interventions. In Railways, not a single new line has been announced by the Government of India in the last nine years. In banking, 70 per cent Gram Panchayats do not have brick and mortar branch. Digital connectivity is only 34.5 per cent in rural Odisha. I urge the government to look into this because people of Odisha deserve much better connectivity.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

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## SPECIAL MENTIONS

### 1. Need for establishing a Centre of Excellence and Research Institutes on Millets in Odisha

**SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:** There are no research institutes and Centre of Excellence on Millets in Odisha despite the fact that the State records a 14-fold increase in the area of millet production within the last five years. This growth is credited to the State's emphasis on millet production through the Odisha Millets Mission, which was launched in 2017. Today, India, along with the world, is celebrating the International Year of Millets. The hon'ble Finance Minister also highlighted the aspiration to make India the global center for millets which apart from various health benefits like prevention of diabetes and preserving cardiovascular health, is suitable for farmers on account of being drought resistant, climate resilient and can be grown without use of pesticides and fertilizers, even in poor soil. Since Odisha is both millet rich and millet diverse State, I request the Government to set up a Centre of Excellence in Odisha and Research Institutes on Millets to boost millet research and production for country's food security and to ensure farmer welfare.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

### 2. Impact of Climate Change in India

**SHRI NARESH BANSAL:** India's monsoons have always arrived with fury and the loss of life and destruction playing out in the country is yet another reminder of the urgency of climate change. Uttarakhand State in the Himalayan range is badly hit by heavy rainfall which triggered flash floods and landslides. India has also suffered through extreme temperatures, including a heat wave. Scientists have warned that extreme weather is likely to become more common and more intense in the coming decades. The effects of climate change are likely to pose profound challenges to sustaining the country's rapid economic growth. I urge the Government to take necessary steps in the matter.

*(Shri Sujeet Kumar associated.)*

### 3. Setting up of e-filing Centres and Virtual Courts

**DR. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE:** My subject is regarding the implementation of the decision of the Ministry of Law and Justice to set up 4,400 e-filing centres in districts and virtual courts in some courts. Government of India had decided to set up e-filing centres in all the districts of the country keeping in view the principle of cheap and accessible justice and 'interest of the litigant supreme'. On 9.3.2023, Hon'ble Minister of Law and Justice, Government of India wrote a letter to the Chief Justices of all the High Courts seeking their consent. The consent of the States of Karnataka, Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim has also been received, the consent of the rest of the States has not been received yet. If the concurrence of the Hon'ble Chief Justices is

not obtained or there is a delay, the Government should adopt some other method. This problem should be resolved at the earliest by sending time bound reminders to all the Hon'ble Chief Justices or holding meetings with the Registrars of the High Courts.

*(Shri Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and Shri Sujeet Kumar associated.)*

#### **4. Vande Bharat train for Meerut, Uttar Pradesh**

**SHRIMATI KANTA KARDAM:** Meerut is a big city in western Uttar Pradesh. There is also a cantonment of the Indian Army here. Vande Bharat Express is an Indian semi-high speed train and India's first engineless train. It is also the first train to be completely designed and manufactured in India. The Ministry of Railways has set a production target of 200 Vande Bharat trains for the next two years. Indian Railways has recently signed an agreement with Tata Steel, under which the company will manufacture 22 trains of the country's fastest and most comfortable Vande Bharat Express. I request the government through you that the new Vande Bharat trains that will be run, should also cover the Meerut route, so that the passengers of this region can also get the benefit of this facility.

#### **5. Opening of CGHS Wellness Centre at Kolhapur, Maharashtra**

**SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK:** During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, employees and pensioners have faced innumerable difficulties due to inadequate health facilities and financial constraints. At present there are adequate CGHS facilities and health centres available in Pune, but the employees and pensioners of Kolhapur hardly take advantage of it due to financial and physical difficulties. So I request the government to open a CGHS wellness centre in Kolhapur.

*(Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

#### **6. Project on Nucleus Breeding Centre**

**SHRI MASTHAN RAO BEEDA:** Project on the Nucleus Breeding Centre for Indian Tiger Shrimp was established more than a decade ago in Andaman under the supervision of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA). So far no Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) brood stock has been made available to the hatchery operators. It is necessary to supply indigenous brood stock of Tiger Shrimp immediately by MPEDA to bring sustainability of aquaculture in the country instead of depending on the imported brood stock. It is learnt that a foreign company has been permitted to establish Broodstock Multiplication Centre (BMC) in India along with the Indian hatchery operator causing monopolistic situation which is not desirable. I urge the Government to direct MPEDA to expedite the arrangements for supplying Black Tiger Brood Stock from its Andaman Project to the hatchery operators.

*(Dr. Amar Patnaik and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

#### **7. Establishment of paper mill in Mayurbhanj**

**SHRIMATI MAMTA MOHANTA:** Mayurbhanj district of Odisha is a hilly and forested area. Most of the tribal people reside here. Bamboo is cultivated on a large scale here, but due to the absence of any bamboo cluster or paper mill, the people here are unable to sell the bamboo at a reasonable price. Traders from other States buy the raw material here at a lower price. Therefore, I request the government to set up a paper mill in

Mayurbhanj district, so that the farmers here can get proper price for bamboo as well as get employment.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Sujeet Kumar and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

### **8. Unprecedented Rains which led to Flash Floods in many parts of Telangana**

**DR. K. LAXMAN:** The unprecedented rains, which led to flash floods in many parts of the State of Telangana, severely impacting lives and livelihoods. Although the entire State of Telangana was affected by incessant rains during the last ten days, four regions of the State, namely, Warangal, Mulugu, Hyderabad, and Bhadrachalam, got severely hit. In Mulugu district itself, there have been 16 deaths and the total number of deaths in the State is still unknown. As a consequence of the flash floods, one village, Morampally, in Bhoopalpally district, faced the threat of complete submergence, but the timely intervention of the NDRF and Army, actually, saved the village. In Hyderabad, over 1200 roads, including many stretches of the national highways, were breached, affecting transportation. In Bhadrachalam, the river Godavari is flowing above the danger line. The farmers in the State are in distress, as crops in several thousands of hectares are severely damaged by the inundation of water and deposits of sand. I urge upon the Union Government to expedite the relief for affected people of Telangana.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

### **9. Need for taking Immediate Decision on Treating Kori-Koli Caste as One and Bringing them under Scheduled Caste Category**

**SHRI BRIJLAL:** The 'Kori' in Uttar Pradesh belong to the Scheduled Caste and their occupation is weaving cloth. During Aurangzeb's time, they were given the option of giving up their cloth weaving profession or converting to Islam. Those who converted from 'Kori' caste were called 'Julaha', who now call themselves 'Ansari' and still have cloth business. The people of 'Kori' caste now have neither the profession of weaving cloth, nor the land for agriculture. People of 'Kori' caste in Meerut, Moradabad and Saharanpur region of Western Uttar Pradesh are called 'Hindu Weavers'. In Uttar Pradesh, issuance of SC certificate to them was stopped 23-24 years back. It was told that only 'Koli' is mentioned in the notification of the government. In Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, people of this caste write themselves as 'Koli' apart from 'Kori' and Scheduled Castes certificate is given in the notification of those states. The government of Uttar Pradesh has told the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment that 'Kori', 'Koli' and 'Hindu Julaha' are the same, they should be kept in the category of Scheduled Castes. I request the Government of India to take a quick decision on this and keep 'Koli' and 'Hindu Julaha' also in the category of Scheduled Castes.

*(Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

### **10. Drinking Water in Kuttanad (Kerala)**

**DR. RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL:** Two million citizens live in the Kuttanad area of Kerala. Due to the use of pesticides in paddy cultivation and the citizens taking bath in canal water and using it for food and drink, cancer is spreading very fast. Piped water supply in tens of villages including Ramankeri, Kerinkeri, Munnar in Veliyanadu block is the lowest in entire Kerala. Citizens have to buy bottled drinking water. The Government of India had started a very ambitious plan in 2019 to provide pure drinking water through pipeline to every household in the country. The Government of India has provided pure water to 11.66 crore houses and 58 crore people in the last 4 years, but out of 67.15 lakh houses in Kerala, only 21.55 lakh houses have been supplied water.

And in the last 4 years, the achievement of Kerala in this matter is the lowest. In Kerala, the availability of pure water in areas like Kuttunad, Veliyanadu was very low even before the scheme was launched and even after four years, piped water supply in other areas of Kerala is only 20 percent. State Governments make the action plan of Jal Jeevan Mission. Common citizens are dying due to cancer, so Jal Shakti Minister is requested to direct the Kerala government to re-formulate its action plan and give priority to ensure pure water supply in all the villages.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)*

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## GOVERNMENT BILL

### **The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023, *as passed by Lok Sabha***

**THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; THE MINISTER OF COAL; AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:** I move that the Bill further to amend the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

**DR. SASMIT PATRA:** This is an important Bill as far as the exploration and mining of minerals in India is concerned. It introduces exploration licenses for deep-seated and critical minerals through auctions. It also allows private companies to conduct reconnaissance and prospecting operations which encourages private participation and exploration. It also excludes six minerals including lithium from the prohibited list which are extremely crucial. The State Governments will also be able to grant exploration licenses for reconnaissance or for prospecting operations. There are a number of deep-seated minerals including gold and silver which are difficult and expensive to explore. By this Amendment, we would be able to ensure that our dependency on imports is reduced. As lithium and many such metals are used in electric vehicles, this would really help us achieve the target of zero carbon emission. By this we will be able to make the country stronger and reduce the imports of lithium. With these words, we support the Bill.

**SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:** On behalf of our party, we support this Bill. The objective of the Bill is to amend The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. It allows previously prohibited activities such as pitting, trenching, drilling etc. It provides that auction for composite license and mining lease for specified critical and strategic minerals including lithium, cobalt, nickel etc. will be conducted by the Central Government. It allows for larger participation of the private sector, especially for lithium. It also brings out lithium from the list of restrictive atomic minerals. Lithium will help us towards greener technology. The proposed amendments also remove the cumbersome forest clearances, making it easier for private firms to participate in the exploration of the country's mineral resources. It also allows States to grant composite mineral licenses without having to get approval from the Centre. This will enable State Governments to put up blocks for auction at a faster pace. I support the Bill.

**DR. M. THAMBIDURAI:** I want to support this Bill. But at the same time, we want to raise certain points. The Bill provides for an exploration license which will be granted through auctions for undertaking reconnaissance and prospecting operations. In Tamil Nadu, lot of minerals are being mined without proper license. They are being taken to the neighbouring States. Therefore, I request the Central Government to take action in this regard.

**SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY:** There are three important points. One is about high import reliance; the second is about infrastructure and investment requirements and the third is about developing recycling capabilities. While the Bill paves the way for reducing India's import dependence for critical minerals, I request the hon'ble Minister to provide clarity on how India will achieve this mammoth goal. Critical minerals are found mostly as constituent part of larger minerals which makes their extraction very expensive. In these circumstances, the entire process is highly capital-intensive and requires complex infrastructure, which India does not have presently. I request the hon'ble Minister to kindly look into the development of infrastructure and provide the required capital and subsidies to the mineral exploring companies. I also request for necessary amendments to the law in relation to recycling. With these suggestions, I support the Bill.

**SHRI G.K. VASAN:** I would like to raise two points about this Amendment Bill. One is that it will help India's EV focus because Lithium is a key mineral for EV and the Bill allows larger mining of Lithium by private sector. The second point is that there are some minerals which are difficult and expensive to explore. The Bill will help to explore the minerals like Cobalt-Zirconium etc. My last point is about Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) in Tamil Nadu. Poor farmers have given their land to the NLC. I request that the poor farmers have to be helped and the lands have to be restored. With these suggestions, I support this Bill.

**SHRI DEEPAK PRAKASH:** I stand in support of The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill. The basic objective of this Bill is to make India self-reliant, capable and powerful. The Bill will not only bring revolution in the field of mines and minerals but will also make India prosperous. A provision for grant of exploration license has been made in the Bill. Now new exploration license will be given with transparency and accountability. We know that this amendment bill proposes to remove 6 minerals from the list of 12 nuclear minerals. These 6 minerals include minerals such as lithium, titanium, beryllium and zirconium, which are important for today's new and high technology. We have to progress in the era of globalization.

**SHRI BABURAM NISHAD:** Almost all the minerals mentioned in the Bill are found in all regions of the country. The district administration should inform the farmers about the minerals present at each place. With regard to the lease of land, I would like to suggest that the initial amount to be deposited at the time of lease of land should be a very small amount so that the farmer may not face any problem. In this way the farmer will be saved from the mafia and certainly he will also be self-supporting. I would urge that NOC should also be issued at the time of giving lease so that mining can be done in time. The district administration should have a very important role for information about minerals so that information about minerals found in different areas can be obtained. Certainly, this bill is very visionary, inclusive and will make us self-reliant. Now we will become exporter from importer and move forward in the field of minerals.

**SHRI ADITYA PRASAD:** At present, it is important to have this bill to meet the increasing domestic demand and strategic needs of India. With this amendment, India will be able to become self-sufficient and world-class in the fields of space, electronics, communication, energy, electric battery and will also strengthen the resolve to make India a manufacturing hub. This act will bring more transparency in the auction process of mines and minerals sectors. This bill will reduce many types of irregularities and new investors and companies will get opportunity in the auction process. This bill will increase our domestic mineral production capacity unprecedentedly. It will create efficient energy market in India as well as bring economic competition in the coal mining sector by reducing coal imports.

**SHRIMATI SUMITRA BALMIK:** I congratulate the government for this amendment bill which proposes to remove 6 minerals from the list of nuclear minerals. These minerals were included in the list of nuclear minerals because of their greater use in the field of nuclear energy production, but today these important minerals are being produced more in the non-nuclear energy sector. These 6 minerals are not naturally radioactive. These minerals are vital to technology, energy and are used in many progressive sectors and are vital to India's net zero emissions commitment. In future, the countries which have reserves of these critical minerals will be at the pinnacle of progress. This Bill will open up exploration and production of these minerals to all companies. Allotment of blocks of these minerals could also be done through auction.

**SHRI JUGALSINH LOKHANDWALA:** We have reserves of many precious metals and potassium, lithium etc. but still they have to be imported. The reason for this was that the earlier governments had reserved them and imposed ban on them. Through this bill, the work of removing the ban on their mining has been done. This will facilitate everything from going into space to making batteries in the future. Due to this, many things will take India towards progress in the coming times.

**SHRI SAKALDEEP RAJBHAR:** The Bill seeks to amend the Mines and Minerals Act, 1957. According to this bill, licenses will be issued for exploration of 29 minerals. Right now, our country mostly depends on the import of minerals. It will also encourage private sector participation in all areas of proposed mineral exploration. In this bill, a provision has been made to allow the private sector to mine 6 out of 12 nuclear minerals. Lithium, a nuclear mineral to be opened to the private sector, is also important because it is used extensively in the manufacture of batteries in electric vehicles and other energy storage devices. The exploration and mining of these minerals in the country is expected to increase significantly once the way is opened for the private sector. The amendment proposed in this bill will result in huge production of coal, which will contribute significantly in making India self-reliant in the energy sector. It will play a vital role in giving a concrete shape to the future of the mining and mineral sector in India. I want to add a suggestion that a provision should be included for giving compensation to the public for the acquired land.

**The hon'ble Minister, replying to the debate, said:** This is a very important Bill. In the era of globalization, even though we have mineral reserves, we import them. There are about hundred precious minerals in our country. These include all types of minerals. Still, we have to import them. Issues like Policy paralysis etc. were responsible for that. Hon'ble Prime Minister had given me this guidance that import of crude oil can be considered correct but importing coal is not appropriate in any way. Coal is a surface mineral. Still, we are importing many such minerals. That's why in 2021 we made huge changes in the coal and mining sector and get them passed. This is followed by a proposal which has a list of 24 critical minerals. Some proposals regarding the mining of 24 minerals present in our country and auction of their mines are included in this Bill. The goal of our hon'ble Prime Minister and also that of the country is to achieve the target of net zero emission. We have to promote electric vehicles which is why the demand of electric vehicles is increasing. For this we need Lithium and also Cobalt. We have taken a pledge that we have to achieve the target of zero percent emissions by 2070. Because of this also, the importance of critical minerals is increasing. We are bringing this law to make India stand on par with the world and developed countries. Australia has a population of only 2.5 crores but they have completed exploration. The only reason for this is that they have allowed investment in exploration. In exploration itself, they allowed private investment as well as private participation. There is a separate company for mining

and a separate company for exploration. Those who do exploration are called junior miners. There are 600 junior miners in Australia alone. Junior miners can take their stake and sell it to a private party after conducting exploration. And government also gets the legitimate royalty for the same that they should get. There was no concept of Junior Minors in our country. Along with this, there is no provision for grant of exploration license. We have put the entire responsibility of conducting the investigation on the Central and State Governments, that is why this change is being brought in it. We will give exploration license. After 2014, honorable Prime Minister has brought a transparent auction process in the country. Junior miners can also contribute a lot in the exploration of potash. We need Lithium, we need Cobalt, and we need Gold. Whatever investment is being made for exploration in the whole world, we are not investing even one percent of that for exploration in India. That is why we have brought up this amendment. We have also kept a provision for private sector participation in this. This provision will especially increase the mining and production of deep-seated and critical minerals in the country. Hon. Prime Minister has said that we have become the fifth largest economy and in our third term, we are going to become the third largest economy of the world. To become the third largest economy of the world, we need these critical minerals. For this we will have to nominate an authority, prepare a document and appoint an agency. Along with this, the concerned departments will also have to be consulted before doing this. We set up District Mineral Foundation in 2015. The District Mineral Foundation has been formed to ensure that there is no shortage of money for the development of tribal areas because most of the minerals in the country are in the tribal areas. The idea is that part of the wealth emanating from tribal areas should be invested in tribal areas. PSUs are already in the area of exploring. We are not able to do adequate exploration and that is why we are inviting private investment in it and that too in a transparent manner. The power requirement of the country by 2030 is going to be double. At that time, we need all these critical minerals for storage. We want to become elder brothers. For that, we need all these minerals to build modern India, new India by 2047, we want to become developed India. For that developed India, these minerals are needed. I appeal to all to pass this Bill and allow us to continue our progress, development and the reforms.

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

*Clauses etc., were adopted.*

*The Bill was passed.*

### **The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023, as passed by Lok Sabha**

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE; AND THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:** When the constitution was framed in our country, at that time the subject related to forests came under the state list. Later, in the 1980s, we brought an amendment to the Constitution and then it was placed in the Concurrent List. After that, in the Forest Conservation Act of 1980, the Central Government had the right to give permission for the use of forest land elsewhere. From the year 1950 to the 1980s, about 45 lakh hectares of land was allowed to be diverted in the country. Thereafter, 10 lakh hectares of land was allowed to be used elsewhere. But, 12 lakh hectares of land was also obtained for compensatory afforestation. Today, in this context, I would like to say that India has committed upon its 8 goals in the ongoing environmental talks at global level. It is also a remarkable fact that under the leadership of Hon'ble Modi ji, India has emerged as one of the few countries in the world and the only country in the G-20, which has a distinction of completing its 2 goals 9 years

ahead of schedule. In the future, we aim to promote renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions. At the Sharm El Sheikh conference held after the Glasgow meeting, our declared future goal is to balance the social, economic and environmental development of the country, while reducing carbon emissions and expanding the country's green belt. That is why, we intend to rename the erstwhile Forest Conservation Act as *Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam*. Through this Bill, the efforts are being made to protect the rights of the tribal society living in forests, in a better way. It would have been better if the hon'ble Members of the opposition were also present during the discussion on this important Bill. To establish girls' schools, water tanks, first aid centers and roads in rural areas for the tribals living inside the forests, and especially in areas affected by left wing extremism like Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Odisha has always been a difficult task. With the passage of this Amendment Bill, they will not need to approach New Delhi, as they will be get a permission at local level itself for acquiring land for such works. This is a matter related to the security of the country. Today, the DRDO of the Government of India has built the world's third largest motorable road in Leh-Ladakh. Now, there is no need for special permission for such a project. This exemption is not for everyone. According to the provisions of this Bill, agro-forestry will also be promoted. Yesterday, The Biodiversity Act was passed in this House and medicinal plants were discussed in that. As per the current system, there is an Agar tree in Northeast India, which you cannot cut. If you plant Teak wood tree in the house, you cannot cut it. The wood which is under agro-forestry, our tribal people can also sow inside their house and in order to preserve agro-forestry, to protect it, to increase its standard of living, a provision has been brought in this Bill. Overall, the Bill seeks to strengthen the forest protection, achieve India's environmental goals, improve the lives of people living in border areas, promote agro-forestry and make every village self-reliant during Amrit Kaal. I hope that this Bill will be passed after a meaningful discussion.

**DR. PRASHANTA NANDA:** I wish to mention that at present there are many religions and each one has got a different God. It is a fact that there are certain gods whom we can experience, whom all religions believe in, such as the Sun God, the Fire God, the Water God and the Tree God. The trees which are deities, where so many gods reside in, we call them a forest. Today, when the Minister has brought the Amendment Bill regarding forests, everyone's attention in the world must be on what is there in it. I want to say that we are Indians and we never compromise with India's security. We are aware that enemy countries and other countries adjacent to our borders have created infrastructure and we have lagged behind in doing so. But, many projects related to national security could not be completed due to the previous provisions of The Forest Conservation Act. The present Bill will address such concerns and that is why I support it. The security of the country is our top most priority. As far as the title of the Bill is concerned, Hon'ble Prime Minister has said that India will achieve zero carbon emission level by the year 2070. We will be able to achieve this goal only through forest conservation and promotion. I would also like to know what specific provisions have been made in it for a State like Odisha. Our state ranks third in the country in terms of population of tribal people. There are more than 62 tribes here and the State Government has released funds worth Rs 2600 lakh crore for them. In terms of increase in forest cover, the performance of the state of Odisha has been 1.04 percent better than the national average. I would request the Hon'ble Minister that the deemed forest area category which has been removed from the purview of the Act, should also be included again in this Bill. There are a lot of forest areas which are neither notified nor included in the revenue records. Such a provision is against the spirit of the judgment given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the *Godavarman Tirumulpad case*. Therefore, in the light of Writ Petition No. 202/1995 filed in the Hon'ble Supreme

Court, the deemed forest area category should also be included under the definition of "Forest" itself. Along with preventing the degradation of forests, we should also focus on new afforestation. In fact, forest is our priceless treasure and the basis of our life. It is my humble request that a charter should be prepared for the fundamental rights of forests for their protection and proper promotion on the lines of life related rights found in the constitution to all of us.

**SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI:** On 'The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023', I would like to say that there is an intention to change the name of The Forest Conservation Act to *The Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam*. The erstwhile Forest Conservation Act had remained only a means of providing a clearance for deforestation. Now the concept of afforestation has also been included in it. Some hon'ble Members have objected to the Hindi origin words '*Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan*' in it. In fact, these words can be found not only in Hindi, but in twenty odd languages of India. Secondly, it clarifies the difference between private forestry and Government forest land. In the light of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the definition of forest land has been suitably clarified. The Hon'ble Minister told that the target of the Government was to bring one-third of the country's land under forest land. He mentioned about the reduction in carbon emissions and also told about other achievements of the Government. The activities like agro-forestry, zoological park and safari being done in the range of forest land will also not be considered as non-forestry. Along with this, if any survey is to be done to find out minerals etc. in the forest area, a permission will be given for the same. For strategic projects of national importance and national security in border areas, a provision has been made that if the Government of India declares any project as a project of national importance within 100 kilometers of the Line of Control or the Line of Actual Control, it will not be necessary to complete the process of forest clearance to take up to 10 hectares of land for infrastructure development. In LWE affected areas, provision has been made that for setting up of paramilitary forces' camps or any defence-related activity within the forest area, up to 5 hectares of land can be released. Similarly, forest land up to 0.10 hectare can be taken for infrastructure projects like road, rail-line etc. Earlier, State Government and Central Government Undertakings did not require permission for land acquisition. Only private companies had to take permission to take land on lease. Now it has been made mandatory for Government Undertakings also to take the permission of the Government. Several steps have been reduced in the process of forest clearance and forest clearance is being given in 180 days. I would like the process to be further simplified so that it can be completed in less time. In fact, the object of the Bill is to maintain a balance between both the conservation of forests and development of the country. That's why many concessions have been given in this, keeping in mind that we have to move forward on the world level.

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