

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, August 01, 2024/ Sravana 10, 1946 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I am pleased to extend greetings to hon'ble Member of Parliament, **Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla** on his birthday today. A Member of this august House since June 2020, Shri Reddy holds a Masters degree in Civil Engineering from Osmania University and has more than 24 years of experience in the engineering field. He received "Engineer of the year award" from Government of Andhra Pradesh and Institution of Engineers in 2005. His interests include Kabaddi, cricket and boxing. He is married to Shrimati Dakshayani Alla and the couple is blessed with Sons - A. Sharan Reddy and A. Ishaan Reddy. Hon. Members, on behalf of this House, and on my own, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to the family Members.

WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM JAPAN

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, on behalf of this august House, I have great pleasure in welcoming **H.E. Mr. Nukaga Fukushima**, Hon'ble Speaker of the House of Representatives, Japan along with the Members of his Delegation who are on a visit to India as our honoured guest. The Delegation arrived in Delhi from Bengaluru on Wednesday, 31st July, 2024. They are now seated in the Special Box. They are scheduled to have various meetings in Delhi before their departure for Japan on 2nd August, 2024. We wish them a fruitful and pleasant stay in our country. Hon. Members, through them, we convey our greetings and best wishes to the Members of Parliament of Japan, the Government and the friendly people of Japan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: (i) Hon'ble Members, on conclusion of discussion and Minister's reply on working of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the discussion on the working of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will commence. After all the speakers for the discussion on the Ministry have spoken today, the reply of Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will be taken up tomorrow at 01.00 p.m.

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

(ii) Hon'ble Members, on the basis of the views expressed by the Leaders of various parties in the Business Advisory Committee, one of the Ministries out of the remaining two to be selected for discussion, would be the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. Discussion will be initiated by AITC. This discussion would commence on conclusion of the discussion on the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Concern Over Non-Functional Status of Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Bihar

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA: The purpose of establishing Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Bihar was to provide equal opportunities for education to the tribal children like non-tribal children. But sadly, these schools located at various places in the state not only lack in basic facilities, they also do not have teaching and non-teaching staff in place. In the absence of these necessary resources, quality education is not possible. We need to address these concerns.

2. Demand for Construction of a Tunnel on NH-75, at Shiradi Ghat, Karnataka

***SHRI NARAYANA KORAGAPPA:** The city of Mangaluru is the second largest city in Karnataka and has various pilgrim centers along with an International Airport and a major sea-port and also well known industries. The city is also a center for various educational institutions. But the 350 km long stretch of the NH-75 at Shiradi Ghat area which connects Mangaluru to Bengaluru gets disrupted every year during the rainy season. On this highway, there should be a 23 km long tunnel just like the Pune-Mumbai tunnel. Only then the public there would travel safely between these two cities. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to provide the tunnel and road connectivity to this area.

(Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)

3. Demand to Ease Credit Card Closure Process Across the Country

SHRI SHAMBHU SHARAN PATEL: While credit card has many advantages, it also has comes with many disadvantages. It is very easy to get a credit card, but if it has to be closed, then many people have to face difficulties. Due to this, their CIBIL rating is affected and when they apply for another loan, the credit card dues are visible at that time. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister that every bank branch should have a help desk for closing or returning the credit card and where the customer can go and easily close or take his credit card.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Demand to Expedite Notification Process for New Land Custom Station between India and Bangladesh

DR. WANWEIROY KHARLUKHI: As part of Look South Policy, I request the Government to open up New Land Custom Station between India and Bangladesh as I strongly believe that the establishment of New Land Custom Station will significantly benefit both our State and also our country and will provide substantial employment opportunities

* Spoke in Kannada.

and economic growth for the people of Meghalaya. This will also facilitate trade and strengthen economic ties between India and Bangladesh. I would like to request the Government to expedite the notification process for the New Land Custom Station in my State.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Demand for Accelerating Work related to Construction of Tunnel between Bangna and Dhaneta in Himachal Pradesh

DR. SIKANDER KUMAR: First of all, I appreciate the efforts of the Government for taking up construction work in the hilly state of Himachal Pradesh where doing construction work is a daunting task. Secondly, I would request the government to speed up the construction of the tunnel between Bangna and Dhaneta in Himachal Pradesh as it will reduce the travel distance from Una to Hamirpur by 15 to 20 kilometres. Since a large number of people come here to visit the Shakti Peeth of Mata Jwala ji and Baba Balakrupi, it will provide a lot of convenience to the devotees visiting these places.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

6. Demand for Intervention of Central Government to Resolve Problems Faced by Farmers of Madhya Pradesh in Selling Moong Crop

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: The production of Moong in Madhya Pradesh has increased rapidly in the last five years. The government purchases Moong produced by the farmers at the minimum support price through registration on the e-Upajan portal. But on 22 July, online slot booking for farmers was suddenly stopped, due to which thousands of farmers were deprived of slot booking. As a result, either the crops of the farmers are getting destroyed or the farmers are being forced to sell their Moong crops to traders at low prices. Farmers are agitating over this in Madhya Pradesh. They are demanding to extend the date of slot booking on the portal and to get the crops of those whose slots have been booked weighed immediately. The state government is completely ignoring this matter. In the interest of the farmers of Madhya Pradesh, I request the central government to intervene in this matter and resolve the problem of the farmers.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

7. Demand for Allocation of Funds Under 'Khelo India Scheme' in Proportion to Players' Participation in International Tournaments from Respective States

SHRI VIKRAMJIT SINGH SAHNEY: I rise to raise a matter regarding judicious allocation under the Khelo India Scheme. As we celebrate the achievements and potential of our athletes on the global stage, it is crucial to address the disparities that could weaken our efforts in nurturing and promoting sports excellence. In the ongoing Paris Olympics, Punjab has demonstrated remarkable prowess and commitment. Out of the 117-strong national contingent that was sent to Paris, Punjab has contributed 19 athletes and Haryana has contributed 24. This achievement highlights these States' dedication to sports and its capacity to produce top-tier talent. However, the allocation of funds under Khelo India Scheme to states does not seem fair. Punjab has been allocated a meager sum of just Rs. 78 crore, which is 3.5 per cent of the allocation. You should remove the old anomalies regarding allocation of funds. More funds should be released to the states which represent the country more in Olympics and other international competitions and bring more medals. This will encourage our youth and they will also stay away from drug addiction and India will become a leading nation in sports.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

8. Concern over Depletion of Number of Water Bodies and Ponds in country due to Illegal Encroachment and Construction

SHRIMATI SANGEETA YADAV: The rampant encroachment and illegal construction at water bodies happens to be a serious concern in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The data shows that rural ponds alone constitute the 59 percent of water bodies. To prevent this situation, the land mafia must be reined in. In a bid to preserve and conserve the water bodies there should be a census and same must be published in public domain.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Concern over non-compliance of Right to Education Act by some Private Schools in Bihar

DR. BHIM SINGH: The Government led by Bharat Ratna, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji made provision for compulsory and free education for children between 6-14 years of age and included it as a fundamental right under Article 2A of the Constitution. Under this provision, private schools also have to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for poor children. However, this provision is being continuously violated in the missionary schools of Bihar.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

10. Concern over Depriving Minorities from Benefits of Grant Available for Marriage of Daughters of Poor People Belonging to Other Backward Classes

SHRI JAVED ALI KHAN: As per the Constitution, India is a secular and welfare state. So, there should not be any kind of discrimination with the citizens in the name of caste, creed or religion. However, in recent times, it was observed that the Uttar Pradesh government issued a circular, in which a meeting was to be held to review and approve the grant scheme for the marriage of daughters of poor persons of the state. This circular talked about excluding OBC and minority people from the welfare schemes of the state. I boycotted this meeting and I immediately called the Social Welfare Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Also, the matter was brought to the notice of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. They have assured to look into the matter. In a system guided by constitutional principles, such discrimination should be discouraged at all costs.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

11. Concern over Devastation caused by Floods during Rainy Season in Haridwar District

DR. KALPANA SAINI: The recurrent floods in the Haridwar region remain a matter of grave concern. This flood cycle causes great loss of infrastructure, life and property. There is an 8 km long embankment up to village *Mathana* in Haridwar district, which should be extended by another 12 km up to the border of Uttar Pradesh state so that the people of this region can be kept safe from the fury of floods.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

12. Inclusion of Assam's Charaideo Moidams, the Old Mound-Burial System of Ahom Dynasty in UNESCO World Heritage List

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: It is a proud moment for every Assamese and every Indian that on 26th July, 2024, UNESCO declared 700-years old Charaideo Moidams site as the World Heritage Centre. Earlier, Manas National Park and Kaziranga National Park were also listed in the UNESCO list. But this is the first time that a historical

site has been listed by the UNESCO. The 'Charaideo Moidams' is the old mound-burial system of great Ahom dynasty. The Charaideo was the capital of Ahom kingdom, which was built by Chaolung Sukaphaa 700 years ago. From 18th century, the Ahom Kingdom decided to adopt Hindu system in their burial system. The Ahom kingdom is the only kingdom in India who defeated Mughals 17 times.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

13. Demand for Restoration and Conservation of Water Bodies in Mithila Region of Bihar

SHRIMATI DHARMSHILA GUPTA: The importance of ponds has always been highlighted in Maithili language, tradition and culture. The Fox nut, fish and betel leaf have been produced in these ponds. Despite this, these ponds have come under threat and due to this many means of employment are also on the verge of ending. The medium and small ponds had vanished two-three decades ago during the reign of previous governments. Due to their extinction, there is a problem of drinking water in cities as well. I request the government to make every possible effort to revive the extinct ponds and renovate the remaining ponds, so that the groundwater level in Mithila region including Bihar can be improved and the problem of drinking water can be solved.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

14. Demand for financially supporting and encouraging Indigenous Sports, like Kabaddi, Wrestling, Badminton, etc. in the Country

SHRIMATI RAJNI ASHOKRAO PATIL: Speaking on the subject of sports, I would first like to congratulate Manu Bhakar, who has won two bronze medals in the same Olympics for the first time in 100 years. The sports are a matter of faith for all people. Sports like wrestling, kabaddi, hu-tu-tu ho have been played in this country for years. The highest honor in wrestling 'Hind Kesari' was started in 1958. In Maharashtra, 25 years ago, an honorarium of Rs 6 thousand was given for the 'Hind Kesari' award, which the government announced to increase to Rs 15 a year ago. But, for 11 years our wrestlers have been waiting for that honorarium. Recently, the cricket team got a huge reward. But, players of other disciplines should also get proper financial assistance. More funds should be given to the Khelo India program. Apart from this, players should also get special quota for medical facilities and employment. By creating a transparent system, respectful behavior should be ensured with them. A regulatory body should also be formed to implement all these things.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

15. Demand to make AIIMS, Raebareli Fully Functional

SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI: The AIIMS, Raebareli was set up about 10 years ago by UPA-II Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi. However, due to lack of adequate facilities, this hospital is still not able to serve the public with its full capacity. This AIIMS benefits the people of about 40 districts of *Madhyanchal* of Uttar Pradesh as well as many parts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Due to lack of adequate facilities here, the general public is facing a lot of difficulties. Therefore, the government is requested to abandon political prejudice and keep public interest in mind and operate this AIIMS with full capacity on priority basis.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

16. Demand to Construct Foot Over bridge at NH-19 in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh

SHRIMATI DARSHANA SINGH: I would like to put forward my issue regarding the construction of a foot over bridge in my home district Chandauli. National Highway-19 passes through here, which is one of the busiest national highways in the country. The pedestrians have to use this six-lane highway between the newly constructed Medical College Naubatpur and the District Magistrate's office in Chandauli. This causes a lot of inconvenience to the people and also causes many accidents. It is my request that a foot over bridge be constructed here.

(Shri Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba associated.)

17. Need for Reducing the Age for Contesting Elections in India

SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA: India is a country of youth, and the average age of our country is 29 years. 65 percent of the population here is below 35 years. But, our leaders and our elected representatives are not from the youth category. In the first Lok Sabha, 26 percent of the people were below 40 years of age and in the recent Lok Sabha only 12 percent of the people were below 40 years of age. Despite being a young country, the youth do not want to come into politics. I request the government to make politics attractive for the youth so that they come forward to serve the country. For this, the minimum age limit for them to contest elections should be 21 years instead of 25 years.

(Ms. Dola Sen, Shri P. Wilson, Shrimati Jaya Amitabh Bachchan, Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal and Shri Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi associated.)

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS - Contd.

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: Given the crumbling nature of existing urban infrastructure, the need of the hour is a complete urban revamp. Urban areas, particularly tier 2 cities, continue to grapple with issues such as shortages in housing, encroachments increasing, slums expanding, environment degrading, garbage disposal missing, electricity hiccuping, sanitation sighing, healthcare weeping, water supply wailing, traffic sobbing, pollution choking, dust flying, stray animals prowling and substandard infrastructure collapsing. Rainwater harvesting was made mandatory while giving permission for new construction, considering the rapidly depleting groundwater. Implementation is zero. Smart Cities Mission is a failed mission. Reduction in allocation by 70 per cent is a clear reflection of its pathetic performance. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is also a failed scheme. The progress of metro projects in many cities is alarmingly slow. Metro projects are awarded without proper feasibility studies, resulting in poor ridership and a wasteful expenditure of valuable resources. The Nagpur Metro is a prime example of these failings. In a glaring instance of poor planning, the location of the new airport station was chosen despite sparse population and poor accessibility, resulting in an average daily ridership of only 47 passengers over 18 months. These instances point out to a failure.

SHRI SHAMBHU SHARAN PATEL: In today's time, all the poor, farmers, labourers want their children to study in cities, due to which the population of district towns is increasing. Therefore, there is a need to improve the infrastructure of small cities along with metro cities and expansion of small cities is also expected. A package of Rs. 26 thousand crores has been announced for road projects in Bihar. In this,

expressways will be built for Patna-Purnia, Buxar-Bhagalpur and Bodh Gaya-Vaishali. A new airport has been built in Darbhanga. On the lines of Kashi Vishwanath, Mahabodhi Corridor in Bihar, Saptarishi Corridor of Nalanda and along with it Rajgir will become big tourist centers. The main focus of the Union Budget 2024-25 is urban development, in which focus is on housing, rental facilities, water supply, security, improvement in assistance for street vendors etc. Allocation of funds for the construction of 3 crore additional houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has been announced.

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Rs. 24,000 crores was allotted for metro rail projects by the Central Government in the recent Budget. Unfortunately, no allocation has been made and no approvals have been granted for Visakhapatnam Metro Rail Project. We request to consider it as per the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act. As per the 2011 Census, there are one lakh-plus slums in the country, home to 1.3 crore households. Slum households constitute 17 per cent of the urban population. I request the government to build multi-storied buildings in the slum areas so that the problem of slums can be addressed. The problem of drainage and infrastructure should be addressed urgently. I appeal to the Government to improve the urban planning of major cities in India. The Scheme DAY-National Urban Livelihoods Mission provides shelter with essential services to the homeless in urban areas. I request the government to kindly look into the issues of housing, particularly, slum areas where poor and downtrodden are living and address it urgently.

SHRI RAMJI: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is a very big authority in itself. It had many Constitutional powers before 1992. But after the 74th constitutional amendment in 1992, many powers went out of their hands. When the 74th constitutional amendment was passed, this power remained with this department in Delhi Capital Region and Union Territories, and in other States, this power was given to the State that all the planning will be done by the Municipal Corporation, Municipal Body and Municipal Councils. After yesterday's rain, Delhi had become like a sea. Therefore, it is also necessary to implement the plan made by the government. It should be seen whether it is being implemented at the ground level or not. If any State, municipality, municipal corporation, etc. does not follow it, strict action should be taken against it. There is also a need for transparency in the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'. It should be seen whether needy people are getting it or those who do not need it are getting it. There are about 675 slum in Delhi. You should bring a housing scheme for them also and also ensure its implementation. I am a resident of Lakhimpur Kheri. The land mafia has taken over the ponds around Lakhimpur Kheri. They have filled up those ponds and constructed buildings and complexes there. The government should also pay attention that such things should not happen anywhere in the country, because we need to save the source of water as well. Further, big companies are coming for the plots that are being allotted for residential projects. Many times, it has been seen that the system of rainwater harvesting is only on papers. It is not being implemented. There was water shortage in the entire country during summer, but to overcome this shortage, the government will have to implement its plans. Today we have reached the moon but could not make any equipment to remove soil and dirt from the drains. Even now this work is being done manually. The government should also pay special attention to this.

***SHRI SADANAND MHALU SHET TANAVADE:** Everyone has a dream of having her/his own house, and under PMAY 1 crore 12 lakh houses have been constructed, and the lives of many people have been changed. Under PMAY 2.0, within

* Spoke in Konkani.

the last 5 years, 10 lakh crore rupees have been spent to provide housing to 1 crore of the poor and middle-class people. With an allocation of Rs.12,192 crore, the Swachh Bharat Mission is the largest ever and also a revolutionary Mission of the Independent India. People of all age groups are now aware of the cleanliness around them. Smart City Mission is crucial in realizing the dream of developed India by 2047. The objective of the AMRUT scheme is to improve the lifestyle of the people living in the cities, and address the issues related to urbanization. Under this Scheme, improvement is being brought about with regard to water availability, solid waste management and the transportation system in 500 cities of the country. RERA has brought transparency in the real estate sector and has boosted the confidence of customers in the housing projects. Under the PM SWANidhi Scheme, 76 lakh street vendors have received credit assistance and 62,36,000 urban street vendors have received collateral free loans worth Rs. 19,000 crore. The aim of this Scheme is to take urban India to new heights and improve the quality of life of the people. The achievements of the Modi Government have changed the image of the entire nation at the international level.

SHRI A. A. RAHIM: The Ministry continues the Union Government's general policy of neglecting Kerala in terms of projects and development. Life mission, a pioneer project by the Kerala Government is a visionary scheme to provide place to rest for the poor. But the Union Government's contribution to this scheme is merely Rs. 1,50,000. I appeal to the Government to kindly enhance its share. The Union Government has introduced an unusual requirement that the logo of the PMAY should be there. This is unfortunate, and this is breach of the Article 21 of the Indian Constitution which provides dignified life for all. The Government must avoid this branding. The Union Government has launched a program called affordable rental housing complex for the migrant workers in the country. But, the result is regrettable. Due to the privatization of the public sector, unemployment in the country is increasing and the number of youths fleeing from villages to cities is rising. They have to work for very low wages and do not even have access to affordable accommodation. Furthermore, many are denied residency on the grounds of caste and religion, I urge upon the Government to ensure lower rent for these migrant workers and housing for all irrespective of caste and religion. I would also urge the Government to end the 'Bulldozer Raj' and table a white paper on this.

SHRI HARIS BEERAN: In India, over 35 per cent of population lives in urban areas, which is increasing every year. Public utilities are under heavy pressure. Though, urbanization has been an instrument of social, economic, and political progress, it has also led to serious socio-economic problems like poverty, unemployment and under-employment among the rural immigrants, thefts, dacoities, burglaries, beggars and other social evils. There is an increase in the outlay for the ministry in comparison to. The affordability and transparency in rental housing market is very important and a regulator needs to be appointed for this. The Flagship program of the Government, PM Awas Yojana has failed to meet the demand. Homelessness and inadequate housing have further burdened public services, impacting healthcare, infrastructure and escalating environmental degradation issues. Another important issue is the urban flooding. Urban floods result in significant loss of life and livelihoods. In most of the cities, damage to vital infrastructure has a bearing not only for the State and the country, but it could have global implications. Therefore, management of urban flooding has to be accorded a top priority. There is a dearth of affordable rental housing options, particularly to student population in Indian cities. I urge the hon'ble Minister to build affordable rental housing facility, particularly in major cities. Also, there is a need to revise the rent control laws which are completely outdated They should be modernized to protect both landlords and

tenants. There is a 70 per cent decrease in the allocation for smart city project. Funding for metropolitan transportation projects has also been reduced. Therefore, I urge that whatever has been reduced in this particular budget, it may be reallocated to the Ministry.

SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI: Maharashtra has the largest urban population and the progress of work as per the amount allocated under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is very low and there is no accountability of anyone. Only 15 percent of the funds allocated for making Nagpur a smart city have been utilised. Unplanned development is taking place in the name of redevelopment, urban housing and beautification of cities. After allotment of big projects to private companies through the prescribed process, they are being given more land than the predetermined land for the project on their demand and environmental concerns are also not taken into account. More and more population keeps coming to cities due to more employment opportunities in cities. Therefore, we should plan our cities and other infrastructure in such a way that it is sufficient for a very long time in the future.

DR. V. SIVADASAN: The urban development is not possible without the development of rural India. Day-by-day, a huge number of youths are shifting from the villages to the cities. Rural India does not have enough employment opportunities, good educational institutions and proper infrastructure facilities. Till now, majority of Indians are depending on agricultural sector, which has been neglected in this Budget. Construction cost of a residential building is increasing. The Government does not have a proper mechanism for providing residential areas for those working in the cities. So, a huge number of families are slum-dwellers. The allocation for housing has been reduced in this Budget. The share of the amount given under the PM Awas Yojana scheme is not sufficient to construct even a proper toilet in the city. However, the Government is very conscious about the branding. Most cities, including the Capital city, Delhi, is facing scarcity of water. I also request the Government to please address the drainage system.

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA: The Government brings various schemes for publicity, but does not implement them properly. Street vendors are the backbone of cities. They are being treated unfairly. The Government makes some policies and the police administration takes action in different manner. The allocation in PM Swanidhi has decreased by 30 percent. The Government should pay attention to it. The allocation in IEC has decreased. Not even half the work has been done in the AMRUT scheme. The needs of urbanization cannot be met without understanding the villages. As long as attention is not paid to rural migration and rural economy, migration from villages to cities will continue and the systems of cities will not be able to accommodate. There is also a lot of imbalance of wealth in cities. Labour is needed for building construction in cities, but as soon as the construction work is completed, we want them to go somewhere far away. Our policies create slums. The slum dwellers cannot be rehabilitated far away from the city. They will not be able to go to their work every day. Our approach should be clear in this regard. Attention should also be paid to the system of sewerage and drainage.

SHRIMATI MAHUA MAJI: There should be proper monitoring of the houses built under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana at the central level and their repair work should also be done from time to time. Har Ghar Jal Yojana is good, but it is not visible anywhere in the urban areas of Jharkhand yet. Earlier there was no shortage of water, but now in many areas water is not available even 600-700 meters below the ground, due to which Har Ghar Jal Yojana has now become necessary. The debris is not thrown properly before laying a road. After many years the road becomes higher and the houses built on

both sides of it become lower. Due to this, water enters people's houses during the rainy season. Apart from this, people have also built shops etc. over the drains. The central Government should bring a new scheme using some modern technology and solve this problem.

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS; AND THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI MANOHAR LAL), replying to the discussion, said: There was a discussion for about 4 hours on the working of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Budget related matters. The hon'ble members got ample opportunity to speak. Expectations were expressed on many subjects in the discussion, a lot of criticism was also made in it and the vision of our Prime Minister to take it forward in the last 10 years was also discussed. I consider this discussion meaningful because expectations are made from the one who works. Before 2014, urban development was not given so much attention as it was given after the coming of Narendra Modi's Government. Even in the 11th year of the Modi government, a huge budget of more than Rs 82 thousand crore was allocated for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, for which I express my heartfelt gratitude to the honourable Prime Minister and the honourable Finance Minister. After the formation of the Government, in the first meeting of the cabinet itself, 3 crore houses were approved under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, out of which 2 crore will be built in rural areas and one crore in urban areas. There is definitely a challenge today, because urbanization is constantly increasing. According to the 2011 census, about 31.2 percent of the total population lived in cities and according to an estimate, this figure will reach 40 percent in cities by 2030. This will put a constant pressure on urban infrastructure. We will have to expand our modern infrastructure and also maintain it to tackle this pressure. The responsibility of maintenance of urban infrastructure lies with the State governments and the urban local bodies. The first assurance I would like to give is that this issue will be taken forward by talking to the urban local bodies Ministers of the State Governments.

I thank all the prominent people who participated in the discussion. The issue on which the most concern was expressed was - urban housing. Ajay Maken ji had specifically raised some issues. Many other members also expressed their views within the same issues. One of their issues was that the number of 29,000 houses sanctioned in Delhi under this scheme is very less. I want to clarify that letters were sent to all the State Governments regarding Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban and an MoU was signed with the Delhi government. Out of all the beneficiaries who had applied through banks, there were 29,976 people who were given Rs 692 crore as interest subsidy in Delhi. If the Delhi Government had demanded, more amount could definitely have been allocated to them. Members have compared this scheme with the National Rajiv Loan Scheme. What I want to say is that only 15,000 people were given assistance under the Rajiv Rinn Yojna in the whole country, whereas in the last 10 years, 29 lakh people living in slums have benefited under this scheme. We have given 13 times more budget than their budget under this scheme. It is not that we are not spending money on the one vertical that he is talking about. Under that, whatever demands the States make regarding its schemes are fulfilled. There are many families who were in villages, later due to urbanization they were included in the cities. They had their old houses, kutchha houses or some plots available. A new scheme has been made for them and they have been given the benefit of it.

Similarly, there is an Affordable Housing Scheme. Under this, people are given the benefit of houses at low cost. Overall, the benefit of all these schemes is given to those who do not have a roof over their head. I want to say regarding 'Housing for All' that the Prime Minister called for everyone to have a roof over their head. These four schemes

have been formulated for this reason. We have not discriminated against anyone in these schemes. We have also ensured that only building a house does not suffice, but the benefit of basic facilities for living in the house is also available through various schemes. The Prime Minister has also made provision for ration for the family members of the house. Ajay Maken ji mentioned about the period from 2004 to 2014. It is correct that the number of cities has increased. Urbanization cannot be done unless there is consent of the people. They could implement those schemes in only 115 cities. Today we have opened these schemes for all cities, that is, for 4,900 cities. Overall, I would say that the schemes launched by the Prime Minister are being welcomed and appreciated everywhere. Jawhar Sircar ji raised the issue of water and some of our colleagues also talked about drainage and drinking water.

Shri Meda Raghunadha Reddy also raised some points on the issue of pollution. I would like to briefly say that the progress of providing tap water connections has increased from 44 percent in 2014 to 70 percent now. Under the AMRUT 2.0 , schemes to provide 1 crore, 80 lakh new tap connections have been approved. We have also made arrangements for the treatment of this water. As far as water pollution is concerned, sewerage and septic projects costing Rs 34,400 crore have been launched under the AMRUT Mission. Thus, in total, 126 lakh sewer connections are also being provided under AMRUT 2.0. When there will be a provision for drinking water and water treatment under the AMRUT scheme, pollution will also definitely come down. Just now the flood risk was being discussed. It is certainly true that earlier these arrangements were made for a certain population, but due to the continuous increase in population, these arrangements fall short. The rainfall that occurred in Delhi yesterday was measured to be more than 8 centimetres, i.e. more than 2 inches in some areas. When there will be rainfall of such a magnitude, such a deficiency in arrangements naturally occurs. Cooperation of all people is necessary in this. As I said, this responsibility is actually more of the state Governments and wherever necessary, we will formulate plans in consultation with them. The drainage master plan was not implemented by the Delhi government. If it had been implemented properly, then certainly the Delhi government and MCD would have been able to complete the work of cleaning and desilting of the drains. 'Swanidhi Yojana' was implemented for street vendors. The main objective of this scheme is that street vendors get the necessary capital for their livelihood. Vendor certificate is also issued to them . A provision has been made in Swanidhi that even if they do not have the certificate, they can get a loan on the basis of recommendation. State Governments formulate such schemes by giving lease or ownership of land to street vendors. A similar scheme has been implemented in Haryana under which contributions are made by street vendors and the State Government and ownership is granted to street vendors.

Hon'ble Member Shri Vikramjit Singh Sahney raised the issue of victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots who have been removed from Tilak Vihar flats. Those who deposited money have been allotted flats, but many people did not deposit the money, due to which their flats are being considered illegal encroachment. Hon'ble Member Shri Jawhar Sircar raised the issue of Rs 2,400 crore budget of Urban Smart Mission. I would like to tell the Hon'ble Member that out of Rs 48 thousand crore, which was earlier allocated for Smart City Mission, Rs 45 thousand 600 crore has already been released for 100 cities by 2024. The remaining Rs 2,400 crore has to be spent by 25 March 2025, no separate major budget has been announced for this. Under the Scheme, 90 percent of the projects have been completed., This budget has been released only for the remaining 10 percent projects. Hon'ble Member Shri R. Girirajan ji raised the issue of the Chennai Metro Rail project which has been pending since 2018. In this project, 20 percent of the cost is to be

arranged by the Tamil Nadu government and 20 percent will be borne by the Central Government and the rest is to be raised through loans. The process is that these loans are given on the guarantee of the Central Government. Tamil Nadu Government had sought financial assistance for Chennai Metro Rail Phase-II. This demand has been fulfilled and the state Government has taken Rs. 9,000 crore, the balance amount has also been recommended and that too will be provided. Overall, this is the subject of the state Governments. However, Prime Minister's thinking is that our cities should be developed in a good way and for those well-developed cities, as much help as possible should be given by the Central Government. We are giving adequate help in this year's budget and will continue to do so in the future as well.

Discussion concluded.

DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' WELFARE

SHRI RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA, initiating the discussion, said: They do praise the farmers a lot for show off, but in reality they put nails, thorns and lances in the path of the farmers. Yesterday there was a boast of making a big budget on agriculture, but the reality is that they surrendered Rs 1 lakh crore from the agriculture budget in 5 years. I will also bring to your notice that in the year 2020-21, the budget of agriculture in the country was 4.47 percent of the total Union Budget, but in the year 2024-25, the budget of agriculture has come down to 2.74 percent of the total budget of the country, that is, it has been reduced by half. I will next put before you another aspect which is PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan). In the 2019 budget, this Government launched the 'PM Kusum' scheme to install 10,000 MW of renewable energy. It aims to install 17.5 lakh solar agricultural pumps and convert 10 lakh farmers' electric tube wells into solar tube wells. By June 30, 2024, in five years, only 1,61,640 individual solar pumps were sanctioned and only 2,644 pumps were installed. Similarly, they had talked about installing 10,000 MW of solar capacity, but 8,112 MW was sanctioned and only 256 MW was installed. Yesterday, great praises were sung about the PM Crop Insurance Scheme. The PM Crop Insurance Scheme is the largest private insurance company profit scheme in this country, because the data of the Agriculture Ministry shows this. 700 farmers were martyred. Condolences were refused inside the Parliament for their martyrdom. The BJP / NDA Government does not buy crops at the declared MSP. This is the misfortune of this country. What is the benefit of MSP? In 2023-24, a very small part of the total production of crops like wheat, gram, sunflower etc. was purchased at MSP. Government statistics reveal this. Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme, this is the most important, because MSP is given on 23 crops, on those crops on which it is not given, if the price falls, there is this Market Intervention Scheme, you have stopped it. This year you have given zero budget for it. Not only this, the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister has made huge cuts in all the schemes related to farming, fertilizer and dairy sector.

SHRI SURENDRA SINGH NAGAR: I want to congratulate the farmers of this country that with their hard work they have made this country self-sufficient in terms of food grains. It is the result of this that today it has become possible for our Modi Government to provide free food grains to 80 crore people of the country. I got the opportunity to be a member of the Agriculture Committee for three years between 2009

and 2014. For three consecutive years, that Committee recommended that the report of the Swaminathan Commission be implemented. The then UPA Government rejected the recommendation of the Agriculture Committee for all three years and did not implement it. This Government itself gave 'Bharat Ratna' to farmer leader Chaudhary Charan Singh ji and Swaminathan ji in the country. If we look at the growth rate in the agricultural sector, then if there is any leading state in this country, then it is Madhya Pradesh. The Government not only encouraged farmers by increasing the prices of oilseeds, but also started the "Palm Oil Mission" to make the country self-sufficient in the matter of oilseeds and edible oils. If anyone understood the pain of the farmers of this country, then it was this Government. The Government gave more than 3 lakh crore rupees to the farmers of this country directly in their accounts through "Kisan Samman Nidhi". There is no middleman in this. If anyone worked to increase the respect of the farmer, freed the farmer from debt, then it was this Government. There are various insurance schemes here, but for a long time there was a demand in the country that there should be a Fasal Bima Yojana for farmers. Work was also done to make this Fasal Bima system optional, now it is the farmer's choice that if he takes a loan, he can get it insured, if he does not want to get it, then he should not. If a farmer paid a premium of Rs 100, then the farmer of this country got a claim of Rs 498. This is the success of the Fasal Bima Yojana'. A provision has also been made in this that if the farmer pays his installment on time, then his interest rate will also decrease, it will come down from 7 percent to 4 percent. The Government rejected the agreement made between 2013 and 2016 and worked to save the subsidy of the farmers of this country which was to be abolished. The Government has worked to solve the problem of urea. Tribal farmers came to Multai in Madhya Pradesh. They were poor tribals and they needed urea. They did not get urea, but more than 24 farmers were shot dead. Through this budget, prosperity will come in this country, the country will move forward, and the farmers of the country will export. Along with self-reliance, they will also be able to export the product.

***SHRIMATI MAMATA THAKUR:** (Spoke in Bengali.)

SHRI M. SHANMUGAM: Food, cloth and shelter are very necessary for all. The Government is not bothered to take care of their issues. Water is a very important resource for farming. The Central Water Commission conceived scheme to link all the major rivers of India. But so far no action has been taken. Water pollution due to pesticides is spoiling the farming sector. The Government should fix the Minimum Support Price with legal guarantee. But the Government is not conceding to the demands of the farmers. The Plantation Associations want value-added benefits of tea and coffee by means of fixing MSP. The cotton growers are demanding to fix MSP after consultation with the cotton growers. Sugar is an essential item. Sugar price is under the control of the Government. While fixing the sugar price, it is not compared with the sugarcane price and there is no scientific calculation. There is a lot of potential in oilseeds production. Due to shortage of agriculture labourers, there is compulsion for the farmers to go for modernisation. But the machineries available now are too costly and the poor farmers cannot afford them. Hence, the Government should spend some money for R&D to innovate small machineries suitable for small and medium farmers. The crop insurance system should be such that there is adequate transparency and accountability. There are

* Synopsis of speech delivered by the hon'ble Member in Bengali will be published separately as supplement.

various Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Under the MGNREGA, the number of working days should be increased to 150 days for rural labourers so that the agricultural labourers would get more number of days of employment in the rural areas. I request the Government to constitute a social security board for agricultural labourers with a corpus fund so that this board will take care of the requirements of healthcare compensation and for providing old-age pension. ESI benefits should also be extended to the agricultural labourers. Kisan Credit Cards should be issued for agricultural labourers so that they can avail the benefits. They should be given training and skill development for improving their conditions and ensuring equitable opportunities. I request to waive off all the farmers' loan, fix MSP with a legal guarantee and allocate more subsidy to fertilizers, and all the produce from the farmers should be procured.

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: The way the urbanization is going on, the way the agricultural lands are being converted for non-agricultural use, food availability for the people will be troublesome. I appeal to the Government to take appropriate remedial measures so as to ensure adequate food for all the citizens of India. The second important issue is of increasing post-harvest losses. In 2022, India lost 15 per cent of its fruits, 12 per cent of the vegetables, and 6 per cent of the cereals. The reason for the same is lack of infrastructure, lack of godowns, lack of cold storage facilities, and lack of adequate marketing arrangements. In our country, even a bumper harvest causes loss to the farmers because of inadequate storage facilities. I request the Government to kindly optimize the supply chain and ensure that losses are prevented, and they are below the acceptable mark of 2 per cent. I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the need to do away with the production and consumption of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). I urge upon the Government to reduce dependence on GMOs and increase the production of organically grown seeds which are better for everyone's health. I also urge upon the Government to take cognizance of the side effects of consuming GMOs. I appreciate the initiative of the Government to focus on the development of agricultural research. I also request the Government to increase the budget allocation for the research and education on agricultural research.

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: There was a time when agriculture was considered the best profession and the best job. 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' can only happen with self-reliant farmers and 'Viksit Bharat' can only happen with developed farmers. The Government has allocated only 2.74 percent amount for the Agriculture Ministry in this budget, which is even less than last year. It means this amount is decreasing. There has been talk for a long time about giving legal guarantee of MSP to farmers. But till now nothing has happened in that regard. I strongly request the Government to give legal guarantee of MSP to farmers. It is said that 54 percent of the people are still dependent on agriculture, but even today we have to import pulses. Import of pulses has doubled. The area under cultivation of pulses has also reduced. There is a shortage of water in our country, for this I request the Government to provide grants or subsidies for modern methods like drip irrigation so that farmers can use it. Talking about rain-water, almost half of the rain-water goes waste. By managing it in a better way, we can use it for agriculture in a cost-effective manner and save agriculture. The water of Punjab's rivers is going to Pakistan, and we fight among ourselves for water. I request the Government to think about this as well. The Government had formed a committee to connect the rivers. I request that rivers in India should be inter-connected to each other, so that their water can be used for agriculture in a good way through new canals. About 40 percent of

agricultural produce in India goes waste. The reason for this is the lack of storage facilities, cold storage, food processing facilities. We talk about organic farming, but we do not have a lab to certify organic products whether it is genuinely organic or not. The country's agricultural export has decreased by 8.8 percent. The share of agriculture in GDP growth is only 0.7 percent and that too has decreased. Farmers commit suicide every year due to loans. I request the Government to take cognizance of this and waive off the farmers' loans up to any amount in one go, so that their lives can be saved.

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