

## RAJYA SABHA

### \*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Friday, August 02, 2024/ Sravana 11, 1946 (Saka)

### BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon'ble Members, I take this opportunity to wish birthday greetings to hon'ble Member of Parliament, **Dr. Anil Sukhdeorao Bonde**. His birthday is tomorrow on 3rd August. A Member of this august House, since July, 2022, Shri Sukhdeorao Bonde has been a Minister in Maharashtra Government and Member of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly for two terms in the past. He is the National General Secretary of *BJP Kisan Morcha*. He is a medical practitioner and also a farmer. He owns high-tech multi-specialty hospital and research center, a hospital in Amravati, Maharashtra, and is a member of Indian Medical Association and the Association of Physicians of India. He runs a school and is associated with a skilling center and an old-age home in Amravati. He is married to Dr. Vasudha Bonde, and together they are blessed with son, Kunal and daughter, Manali. Hon'ble Members, on behalf of this House and myself, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and also extend greetings to family members.

Hon'ble Members, I take this opportunity to extend birthday greetings to hon'ble Member of Parliament, **Shri Mahendra Bhatt**, whose birthday is on 4th of August. A two-time Member of the Legislative Assembly of Uttarakhand, 2002 to 2007 and 2017 to 2022, Shri Bhatt has recently been elected as a Member of this august House in April, 2024. He was also the Vice-President of Minor Irrigation Department, Government of Uttarakhand 2010 to 2012. Hailing from Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, he has been an active leader since his youth and held several key positions at the State level. In the BJP, he also played active role during the *Uttarakhand Rajya Andolan*. He is married to Shrimati Muni Devi and the couple is blessed with son, Abhishek and daughter, Vaishnavi. Hon'ble Members, on behalf of this House and on my own, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to his family members.

### MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

#### 1. Multiple incidents of cloud bursts in Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttrakhand

**SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI:** Due to heavy rainfall, Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh have been flooded. The 6 people have died and about 50 people are missing. The Hundreds of people are stranded on the roads. A school, health centre and two power projects have also been damaged. Similarly, cloudburst has caused havoc in Haridwar, Dehradun, Chamoli and Tehri in Uttarakhand, in which about 16 people have died and many

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

people have gone missing. Many routes are blocked. The NDRF, SDRF, Police, Home Guard and fire brigade are engaged in relief, search and rescue operations. The frequent disturbances with nature and rise in global temperature are leading to flash floods and landslides. The advanced radar network is required for early warning and better disaster management. The Government should establish such facilities. Therefore, I urge the Central Government to take into account all these aspects and formulate a comprehensive solution program and provide the necessary funds including a special package to the governments of these two states.

*(Shri Haris Beeran, Dr. John Brittas and Shri M. Mohammed Abdullah associated.)*

## **2. Demand to Safeguard Gig and Online Platform Workers from Exploitative Practices**

**SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:** I would like to draw the attention of the Government to safeguard the gig and online platform workers from exploitative practices being employed by some private companies. The unorganized gig economy offers flexibility and income opportunities to nearly 80 lakh workers. These gig workers played a role in the economy by virtue of their roles as drivers, delivery persons and agents even during COVID times. But the recent reports highlight the precarious conditions faced by these workers. For instance, they do not get any kind of health insurance coverage or medical facilities. We need to adopt global standards to provide them adequate social security, health insurance and maternity benefits. The state governments also need to make appropriate legislations, in this regard. I urge the Government to establish a national framework for the regulation of the gig economy and ensure uniform standards for all workers across the service sector.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **3. Representation of India by 117 Athletes in the Olympic Games**

**\*SHRIMATI MAMTA THAKUR:** The tradition of 'unity in diversity' of our country will be represented at Olympics, where our 117 athletes are participating. Out of them, 70 are men and 47 are women athletes. No one has raised any question about their caste, creed, religion and language. They all play and are playing for the country. Every Indian is a passionate supporter of them. In the same spirit, an unconditional citizenship should be granted to all the people wishing to reside in India. The identity proof and other papers must not be demanded from them. We should live together and move ahead.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **4. Demand to Set Up Super Speciality Medical Centre in Each District of Haryana**

**SHRI KARTIKEYA SHARMA:** I rise to bring this issue to the attention of this august House. There is an urgent need to upgrade our healthcare infrastructure at the district level in Haryana. Currently, the district-level health care often lack advanced medical services needed to treat the complex diseases. The critical patients are forced to seek treatment in far-off metropolitan cities, which remains highly unaffordable for them. Despite having dedicated healthcare professional and staff, our existing Government hospitals need substantial upgrades to meet the growing and diverse medical needs of our population at the local levels. To expedite the process, we can adopt the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model to set up super specialty hospital across all districts. The Central Government can play a lead role and subsequent recurring expenditure can be met by state government. We can

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\* Spoke in Bengali.

also utilize the CSR funds for this purpose. As a result, the tertiary level medical facilities would be available for citizens at district level itself.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **5. Demand for Regulation of Sale of Pesticides for its Optimum Utilization and Better Agricultural Production**

**SHRI M. SHANMUGAM:** I wish to draw your attention towards rampant use and sale of banned pesticides in India. According to the Expert Committee Report, 66 pesticides are either banned or restricted in other countries. Even a pesticide, Endosulfan, banned by hon'ble Supreme Court, is being used in agriculture. The distributors and agents of fertilizer and pesticide are selling these banned items. Sadly, the poor and ignorant farmers continue to use these pesticides. There should be periodic review about the use of such chemicals. Their use must be reduced and other options must be exercised. I also demand that there should be a regulatory mechanism to monitor use of optimum and select pesticides for better agricultural production.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **6. Demand to Start Direct Flight from Delhi to Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh**

**SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN:** I would like to mention the Jagdalpur city in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, which does not have any direct air connectivity with Delhi, till date. The hundreds of mines and Navratna companies are operating in this area. This place is also very important from the tourism point of view and many magnificent temples are located here. With the start of direct air service, the number of tourists coming here from the country and abroad will increase. This will benefit the people of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. Therefore, considering the importance of this matter, a direct flight service from Delhi to Jagdalpur should be started.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **7. Demand to Start Commercial Air Services from Andhau Airstrip in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh**

**DR. SANGEETA BALWANT:** During the last 10 years, the number of airports in India has gone up from 74 to 148. During the Second World War, an airstrip spread over 63 acres was built up at a place called Andhau in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh. This airstrip is still operational, where chartered planes ply on daily basis. I demand that the Ghazipur Andhau airstrip be set up for commercial air service under the ambitious 'Udaan Yojana' of the Central Government, because this will facilitate the movement of people of Ghazipur district as well as Mau, Ballia, Azamgarh, Chandauli districts and many districts of the bordering Bihar state.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **8. Construction of a New Railway Line from Bolangir to Nuapara via Patnagarh - Khaprakhhol - Lakhna for cultural and socio-economic development**

**SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI:** The final location survey for construction of new railway line from Bolangir to Nuapada via Dhulusar-Chudapali-Bhainsa-Patnagarh-Gambhari-Khaprakhhol-Lakhna has already been completed. The distance of new railway line is 100 kilometers. The proposed new railway line will fulfill the demand of tourists and cultural development of Harishankar temple and also the biodiversity heritage site of Gandhamardan Hill Range, as well as the socio-economic development of Western Odisha. Lord Shiva is worshipped at Harishankar. On the other side of the Gandhamardan Hills, Lord Nrusinghanath,

incarnation of Lord Vishnu, is worshipped there. So, lakhs of devotees, lakhs of tourists and nature lovers go to that place. But there is no railway, Air or road connectivity available. The government will be benefited owing to the commercial viability of the proposed new railway line.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **9. Demand for Allocating More Funds for Development of Railways in Kerala**

**SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM:** Some of the important projects such as the Angamaly-Sabari Railway Line which is the connecting line to the Sabarimala Shrine remain a distant dream with no sufficient allocation for it. There is no fund allocation for the Ernakulam-Kayamkulam Doubling, while the Trivandrum-Kanyakumari Doubling has less allocation when compared to previous Budgets. The location survey of the Ernakulam to Shoranur, the third track is still not completed. The temporary Ernakulam to Bengaluru Vande Bharat may be made permanent. There is a significant shortage of Super-fast Express and Passenger and MEMU services. The urgent requirement is to have services originating from Trivandrum- Kottayam and Ernakulam. I urge the Central Government to address these disparities and also to allocate sufficient and additional funds so that these issues can be addressed and also prioritize passing of the projects which are already announced.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **10. Demand for re-examining Special Category State Status of Assam According to Current Economic Situation of State**

**SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN:** The Special Category States came into being in 1969 upon the recommendations of the National Development Council which made the provisions of allocating 30 per cent of the total fund available under the head of normal plan assistance to State plans of three States, viz., Assam, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir. Assam should continue to be a Special Category State because Assam is one of the three States to be accorded as a Special Category State in 1969 upon the recommendation of the National Development Council. The 14th Finance Commission did not and cannot revoke the status simply because this is not within their jurisdiction. As such, the status of Special Category State continues for the State of Assam. The 14th Finance Commission has not come up with a specific recommendation regarding discontinuation of the Special Category State in their report in deciding the transfer of resources to States from the Union. Therefore, in essence, there is no reason to believe that the Special Category State's status of Assam has come to end.

*(Dr. John Brittas, Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla, Shri Niranjana Bishi and Dr. Fauzia Khan associated.)*

#### **11. Demand for expediting ongoing infrastructural work for National Sports University in Manipur**

**SHRI MAHARAJA SANAJAOBA LEISEMBA:** In recognition of Manipur's contribution in games and sports, the Government of India has taken a historic decision for the establishment of a National Sports University of world-class standard in Manipur. However, after getting adequate land for construction at Koutruk, a village in Imphal, West District Manipur, the progress of infrastructural construction and other related works are very slow. So, I humbly urge upon the Union Government and the concerned ministry to expedite the ongoing infrastructural work of National Sports University so that it may be fully functional at the earliest.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **12. Demand for Establishing a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model for Accurate Weather Forecasting in Country**

**DR. KANIMOZHI NVN SOMU:** In India, extremely harsh weather conditions like heat waves, bitter cold, unprecedented heavy rainfalls cause heavy loss of life and damage to property and paralyse the normal life and hence productivity. The Indian Meteorological Department, the National Disaster Management Authority, and the Indian Space Research Organization are responsible for weather predictions and early warnings. A public-private partnership model is more suitable for India. Private entities having proprietary sensors for weather data collection run sophisticated models and utilize supercomputing resources to analyze vast amounts of global data. I urge upon the Government to establish PPP model for weather forecasting, which is very essential for India's progress in coming decades.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **13. Demand to Construct a Multipurpose Hall in Kondagaon District of Chhattisgarh for the Players of the State and to Include Archery in Scheme for Promotion of Rural, Indigenous and Tribal Sports**

**SHRIMATI PHULO DEVI NETAM:** Chhattisgarh has given many players who have brought glory to India in the country and the world. In the first National Tribal Sports Competition held in June 2023, the players of Chhattisgarh won 15 medals. The girls of the football girls team proved their mettle by winning the gold medal. They have also performed excellently in archery. In Chhattisgarh, especially in the tribal-dominated Bastar division, there are very good players, but due to lack of sports infrastructure; they are not able to progress at the international level. Therefore, my request is that a multi-purpose hall should be built in Farasgaon of Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh and archery should also be included in the scheme to promote rural indigenous tribal sports.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **14. Demand for a Special Package for North Bengal**

**\*SHRI SAMIRUL ISLAM:** The Minister of State of Indian Government has met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has made a request to the effect that North Bengal be merged with the North Eastern Development Council. Division of Bengal is being talked about in a roundabout manner. Bengal comprises of Darjeeling Hills in the north and Bay of Bengal in the south. No allocation has been made in the General Budget for the devastating Ganga erosion of Malda, flood control of Teesta, or the development of Darjeeling Hills and tea gardens. Sometimes bifurcation of Bengal is being attempted; sometimes internal conflicts among various sections of the society are being envisaged. I demand an exclusive Special Package for the people of North Bengal.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **15. Demand for 'Green Bonus' and Special Package for the State of Uttarakhand**

**SHRI NARESH BANSAL:** The geographical conditions of Himalayan states including Uttarakhand are different from the rest of the states of the country. Here, on one hand, there is abundance of natural beauty and wealth and the environment is clean, on the other hand, there is also a complex problem. Due to the complex geographical conditions, development work is greatly affected here and the completion of the schemes takes time. Many projects are pending for a long time due to this reason. The work that is

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\* Spoke in Bengali.

done easily in the plains becomes very difficult in the hilly states from the labour and economic point of view. It is very important to make a separate policy of development according to the geographical and social structure of the hilly states. The population of Uttarakhand state is 1.20 crores, but if the number of tourists, devotees coming on various religious pilgrimages, festivals and celebrations is added, then it becomes more than 8 crores. Basic facilities have to be arranged for such a large population of the state. Uttarakhand has been demanding a special package and green bonus for more than a decade. Uttarakhand's forested areas, glaciers, perennial rivers benefit other parts of the country more than Uttarakhand itself. While Uttarakhand has so much natural wealth, it is lagging behind in the path of development. Hence, this can be compensated only by green bonus. I request the government to give green bonus and special package to Uttarakhand.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **16. Supply of SPF P. Monodon Brood Stock to Registered Shrimp Hatcheries**

**SHRI BEEDHA MASTHAN RAO YADAV:** Government of India through Coastal Aquaculture Authority of India approved the supply of brood stock of monodon by two empanelled suppliers vide dated 17.02. 2020. This empanelment is for continued supply of SPF brood-stock of Monodon to demanding Indian shrimp hatcheries and, in turn, they will produce seed and supply to the Indian aqua farmers. But, both these firms are supplying brood-stock to only one hatchery under each of them which, essentially, leads to monopoly in sale of post-larvae. Since there is no response for our supply request to both empanelled overseas firms, we would request your kindness to do the needful, so that they will confirm supply of SPF brood-stock to all the Indian registered hatcheries.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **17. Demand to Abolish Tax on Shoe Manufacturing and Simplify Rules for Shoe Industry**

**SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:** Agra has a shoe industry which is almost 300 years old, and which is a kind of cottage industry. Children, elderly, women and men make shoes while staying at home. Children who should be going to school, are engaged in shoe making. In 1974, the state government of Uttar Pradesh made shoe industry tax free. With the aim of improving the condition of shoe artisans, a shoe market was also built, which was named Shoe Plaza. The state government built a shoe exhibition and training center, according to which the state government gave free land and it was said that the Agra Development Authority would build shops and these artisans would be given shops at cheap rates. This was an attempt to make the artisans self-reliant, but the shops built by the Development Authority were so expensive that shoe artisans could not buy these shops, they were beyond their capacity. The government has also stopped buying shoes since 2008. Due to lack of government protection, many small units have closed down. I request the government that artisans should be given space in industrial areas, rules should be simplified, loans should be given to artisans at cheap interest rates, markets should be made available to artisans and some symbol or card should be given to the artisans through which they can sell their products.

*(Shri Niranjana Bishi, Dr. John Brittas and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)*

## STATUTORY RESOLUTION

### Seeking Approval for Amending the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY):** I move the resolution that in pursuance of Section 8A of the Customs Tariff Act 1975, this House hereby approves of notification No. 15/2024-Customs, dated 12th March, 2024[G.S.R. 182(E) dated 12th March, 2024], which seeks to amend the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act, in order to increase the import duty on X-ray Tubes, falling under tariff items 9022 30 00, and Flat Panel Detectors (including Scintillators), falling under tariff item 9022 90 90, respectively.

*The Statutory Resolution was adopted.*

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### DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' WELFARE - *Contd.*

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE; AND THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHAUHAN), replying to the discussion, said:** I want to assure the Members that the Government will take the positive suggestions of the hon'ble Members seriously and make efforts to implement practical solutions. The priorities of the main opposition party have always been wrong in relation to agriculture. Indian tradition of farming was not followed, Russian model was implemented. Due to wrong policies, the countrymen were forced to eat PL-480, rotten red wheat. Levy was forcibly collected from the farmers. A lot of announcements were made but no meaningful steps were taken to increase the income of farmers. Agriculture related industries were not delicensed. But the priorities were changed under the leadership of the present Prime Minister. Today, our priorities are increasing production, reducing the cost of production, paying fair prices for produce, giving adequate relief in natural disasters, diversification of agriculture, value addition in farming and efforts to promote natural farming so that the earth remains safe for the coming generations. Some hon'ble Members mentioned that the budgetary allocation for agriculture has been reduced. I would like to tell you that the budgetary allocation for agriculture was only Rs 27,663 crore in 2013-14, which increased to Rs 1,32,470 crore in 2024-25 and this figure is only of the Department of Agriculture. If other sectors related to agriculture such as fertilizer subsidy, cooperatives, animal husbandry, food processing and fisheries etc. are added to it, then this budget increases a lot. Earlier, all these departments were one and even then the budget provisions were very less compared to today. There is adequate budget provision. Then there is a separate Ministry of Jal Shakti, which is engaged in the management of irrigation. If we have to increase production, our first priority will be to provide water to the dry fields of the farmers. Irrigation arrangements were never given serious attention. Earlier, in the state of Madhya Pradesh alone, only seven and a half lakh hectares of agricultural land was irrigated, today it has been increased to forty-seven and a half lakh hectares. Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had talked about linking of rivers. This project was first implemented by Narendra Modi ji when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. By diverting the water of the Narmada river into many rivers, the work of reviving dead rivers was done. The construction work of many dams was not completed for years because farming and farmers were not a priority. We are working on many irrigation schemes including micro irrigation schemes. Good farming requires good seeds and good inputs along with irrigation and the present Government has been providing these to the farmers for the last ten years. ICAR has developed good quality seeds, even now we are going to release 109 new seeds. In

the year 2023-24, the production of food grains has reached 329 million and horticulture production has reached 352 million tonnes. Work is also being done rapidly in the field of pulses and oilseeds and production and productivity are increasing continuously. Some hon'ble members said that the fertilizer subsidy has been reduced, but I want to clarify the situation. The Government arranges the required amount for fertilizer subsidy. If additional amount has to be given apart from the budget provision, then it is given. Right now due to international conditions, DAP ships had to travel a longer route, which took more time and hence the price of fertilizers was increasing. The government did not put the burden of that increased price on the farmers and gave a special package of Rs 2,625 crore so that farmers keep getting fertilizers on affordable prices. One member mentioned that the quantity in the urea bag has reduced. But I want to tell that the cost has also been reduced. We never allowed the price of fertilizers to increase. Not one but many steps have been taken to ensure that farmers are able to do profitable farming. Many hon'ble Members had expressed concern over the shortage of water. The level of underground water is depleting, there is a crisis of drought in many places, so we have to save every drop of water. That is why 'Micro Irrigation Scheme' has been introduced. In other methods of irrigation, there may be leakage or evaporation of water, but in the micro irrigation scheme, every drop of water reaches the farmer's field directly. The previous Government did not know the importance of water. Now if you look at the micro irrigation scheme, this Government has spent Rs 21,312 crore since 2014-15 and we have worked to increase the area rapidly. Some hon'ble member suggested that even small farmers need agricultural machinery. A sub-mission for agricultural mechanization has been set up by the Government and under it, small and marginal farmers, who are up to 85 percent in number, are given financial assistance for the purchase of machinery. The use of the highest technology and efficient equipment is promoted. Custom hire centers have been set up from where even small farmers can take machines on rent and work in their fields. Many innovations have taken place. Farmers of Haryana and Punjab have filled the food reserves in the country. But stubble was a problem, this Government made a new scheme in 2018 to deal with the problem of stubble so that the crop residue becomes profitable for farmers and there is no air pollution. Crop residue management scheme was launched in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi, which has resulted in reduction in stubble burning and pollution caused by it. Earlier, farmers used to spray pesticides manually. Many times, the side effects of pesticides had a major adverse effect on their health and hence drones were used. We are trying to make it as popular as possible. For this, members of self-help groups were trained. They are being called Namo Drone Didi. 14,500 drones have been given with 80 percent central assistance. This will provide employment to women and farmers will also be saved from risks. Opposition party says that the Swaminathan Commission report should be implemented. But, when the Swaminathan report came, their Government was in power. Then why was the Swaminathan Commission report not implemented then?

If any Government has implemented the report of the Swaminathan Commission, it is the Government of Narendra Modi. When the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices fixes the Minimum Support Price, it does so by adding 50 percent profit on the cost. After 2014, we have increased the price of millet by Rs 1,375 per quintal, barley by Rs 750 per quintal, and paddy by Rs 975 per quintal. During the Congress Government, wheat was sold at the minimum support price of Rs 1,400 per quintal. We have increased it to Rs 2,275 per quintal. The prices of gram, lentils, groundnuts, soybean etc. have increased. I want to tell the farmers of the country one more thing that the country has to be made self-sufficient in pulses and dependence on imports has to be done away with. Therefore, the Government has decided that whether it is pigeon pea, lentil, black gram, whatever crop the farmers produce, they should register it on the portal, their entire crop will be procured at MSP. Our learned

friend Surjewala ji was telling that so much was produced and so much was purchased. What is the purpose of Minimum Support Price? If the farmer gets a price below MSP, he will sell it at MSP, but if he gets a fair price for the crop, he will not come to sell it at MSP. The price of Sharbati wheat is four to five thousand rupees per quintal. Do you want to sell that also at MSP? Basmati rice is grown in Haryana, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh which fetches good prices. We have exported Basmati rice worth 40 thousand crores. If farmers get good prices, shall they come to sell it forcibly saying that you should buy it at MSP only! Many times pulses get good prices and when we get good prices, how will we buy it at MSP? The farmer is not just a human being, but he is a food provider, meaning he is a life giver for us. Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The farmer is not our vote bank, the farmer is God for us. Whether it is procurement of paddy or wheat, whenever need arose, the Government has made adequate procurement. During the period from 2004-05 to 2013-14, only 6,29,000 metric tonnes of pulses was procured, but this Government has procured 1,70,00,000 metric tonnes of pulses during the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24. Our Government will continue to provide uninterrupted support to farmers.

Credit was being talked about. Congress had announced a number of times in its manifestos for the Centre and the States that as soon as they come to power, all loans will be waived off. But loans were not waived off. Now I want to come to loans and loan waivers. During the Congress Government, there was no provision of credit cards for farmers. Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji understood the problem of farmers and rolled out the system of Kisan Credit Card under which farmers started getting loans at low interest rates. Our small farmers had to take loans from moneylenders at high interest rates and had to pay heavy interest on it. Today, such farmers are being given loans at 7 percent interest rate through credit cards and at just 4 percent interest rate on repaying the loan on time. In the Budget too, interest subsidy has been increased by 3.6 times. During the Congress regime, total loan amount stood at Rs. 7 lakh crore only. In the present Government, this amount stands at 25 lakh crore. In the last 10 years, interest subsidy of more than Rs 1,44,000 crore has been given.

Congress never paid attention to the crop insurance scheme. During their time, such a crop insurance scheme was implemented whose unit was the tehsil. It means that if a farmer's crop gets damaged, then he will get no relief. Relief was given only when the crops of the entire tehsil got damaged. After Modi ji became Prime Minister, the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* was launched. This scheme has changed the entire scenario. During the Congress, the loan applications were only 3 crore 51 lakh and in 2023-24 this number has increased to 8 crore 69 lakh. They used to insure only the loans of banks. If relief was given by fraud, then even in that the bank people used to deduct their loan. The farmer did not get anything. The insured area has now increased to 5 crore 98 lakh hectares. The total insured amount used to be 82,000 crores during their time, which has increased to 2,71,295 crores now. You criticize crop insurance! During their time, farmers used to pay premium of Rs 16,442 crore, claims amounted to Rs 63,617 crore and now the premium amount is Rs 32,440 crore and farmers have received claims amount of Rs 1,64,000 crore. This is the world's biggest Crop Insurance Scheme. Nowadays, many countries are coming to study this scheme who want to implement Crop Insurance Scheme in their countries. When Congress was in power, there was another problem and that was absence of storage facilities. No warehouses were ever constructed during Congress's time.

There were no cold storages, no warehouses and no grading and sorting arrangements during Congress regime. Due to this, farmers often had to sell their produce at throw-away prices. In 2020, the Prime Minister had announced an Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore and by 26 July 2024, Rs 46,080 crore has been sanctioned for 72,222 agriculture infrastructure projects. Under this, warehouses, primary processing centres, sorting and

grading units, cold storages, cold chain and other types of post-harvest management projects and community agriculture assets have been built.

Innovations were also needed to ensure that farmers get fair prices. Therefore, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the National Agriculture Market, eNAM was launched. It is an all India electronic trading portal, which seeks to create a network of real APMC through a virtual platform for a registered national market for agricultural products. As of July 28, 2024, 1 crore, 77 lakh farmers and 2 lakh, 61 thousand traders have been registered on this portal. If remunerative prices are available somewhere in another market, then the farmer did not have any arrangement to sell it at a better price. Now this has gradually become possible due to e NAM . The farmer has benefited a lot from this. 85 percent of our farmers are small and marginal. They do not have much money to invest in farming. If he has to buy fertilizer or seeds, he goes alone, which takes more time and money. If there is less production and he has to sell it alone, then its transportation becomes costly. Therefore, there was a need to create a system where small farmers could come together and form groups, buy grains collectively, sell their produce collectively and, if needed, even take to processing work. In 2020, the Government of India launched a scheme to promote and form 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations, i.e. FPOs, with a total budget of Rs 6,865 crore. Today, 8,875 FPOs are working across the country. Farmers have never been the priority of the Congress. I want to say that by giving this FPO the form of a movement, we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that small and marginal farmers get fair prices and that they also enter the field of food processing. This will change the lives of poor farmers. There have never been any innovations like this before.

Under the leadership of Modi ji, many efforts were made to reduce the cost of production. When farmers needed money for seeds, fertilizers, etc., they had to go to the money lenders. But this problem was never recognized by the Congress, but Narendra Modi ji recognized it. For this, 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana' was rolled out under which the Government is giving 6,000 rupees every year to the farmers in three installments through direct benefit transfer. There was a Prime Minister in this country who used to say that if one rupee is sent from here, only 15 paise reaches the bottom. But now if one rupee is sent, the full amount reaches the beneficiary. When a poor farmer gets two thousand rupees in three installments, he fulfills his immediate needs, and this money becomes a boon for him. I am happy to say that under this scheme, Rs 3,24,000 crore has been deposited in the accounts of farmers so far.

*Reply to the discussion not concluded.*

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** (i) Giving due consideration to the suggestions and sentiments of many Members to enable wider participation in the Discussions on the working of the remaining Ministries, the Chairman announced that the reply by the Minister to the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will continue on Monday the 5th August, 2024 at 1-00 p.m. and thereafter the discussion on the Working of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy which is Listed in Revised List of Business for today, will be taken up. The Chairman also announced that the House will be adjourned for the day after the time allotted for Private Member's Resolution is over.

(ii) Hon'ble Members, the Constitution was amended and Part-IX(B) was inserted in the Constitution as a consequence of the Constitution (Ninety-seventh Amendment) Act, 2011, in the year 2012. That pertains to the co-operative societies. Earlier, similar

Amendment was made in the Constitution for Panchayats and Municipalities. The Discussion on the Ministry of Co-operation has not taken place in either of the Houses thus far. This being a very important sector for our social development, the fourth Ministry for discussion will be the Ministry of Co-operation. The Discussion will be initiated by the DMK Member, Shri Tiruchi Siva.

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### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' RESOLUTION**

#### **Legislation to remove Education from Concurrent List and Move it to State List in Seventh Schedule to Constitution**

**SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA:** I rise to introduce my Private Member Resolution to remove Education from the Concurrent List and move it to the State List, repeal NEET and NTA and revert to medical admissions based on the criteria of State Government which are uniquely tailored to the requirements of particular States, provide a compensation of Rs.1 crore to the families of victims affected by the NEET exams. Having regard to the facts that certain States are opposed to the National Eligibility cum Entrance Exams due to the injustice inflicted to the domiciled students of the State and infringement upon the autonomy of the State Government in the field of medical education. The latest instance of NEET controversy is the culmination of a situation brewing over years. Papers have been routinely leaked; the release of incorrect results has been connected to aspirant suicides. The Government has cancelled the NET examination conducted by NTA, compounding doubts about its institutional integrity. What is important to understand is that cheating or fraud in NEET or NET or other such highly competitive examinations is only a consequence of bad policy. We Tamils protested against the imposition of Hindi. At that time, you argued that we needed a common language for our diverse country. We both can understand English but can we both go to England and compete with them by any case; never. The outcome would be similar for all non-Hindi speaking States if Hindi will be imposed as our common language. The DMK has long opposed NEET, having secured a stay from the Madras High Court on its implementation when it was first introduced in 2010. The Dravidian Movement is founded on the belief that education is a powerful tool for cultural transformation and advancing social progress. In 1921 the knowledge of Sanskrit was a mandatory requirement for admission to medical colleges. The purpose of education should be to examine all aspects of society impartially. With the emergence of national-level common entrance examinations for every professional course, school-leaving examinations have become pointless and coaching centres have mushroomed with the sole purpose of preparing students for these entrance examinations. I would urge the Government to repeal NEET and protect State autonomy. I request to disband conducting of NEET exams and opt for the decentralised examination system, thereby upholding state autonomy and safeguarding the future of the millions of students across the country.

**DR. ANIL SUKHDEORAO BONDE:** I oppose this Resolution because ours is a federal state. There should be a uniform exam across the country for anyone who takes admission in a medical college here. There was no NEET in 1977, there was no exam at that time, we took admission on the basis of 12th marks. Before 2015, the situation was such that there were government medical colleges in the state, there was a separate exam for them; there were private medical colleges, they had formed an association, that association had a separate exam; different deemed universities took their own exams. The association's exam was the mockery. That is, all the private medical colleges used to first decide how much fees the boy was going to pay, how much money he was going to pay. They used to make a list of them, then they used to take the exam. The exam, which was just an exam in name, had a

merit list. Now there should be only one exam for this, whether a boy is from a village, from a poor family or from a far-off place, he should not have to fill many forms. It was very important to create a statutory body to conduct exams for admission to higher education institutions. The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education established the National Testing Agency for this reason. The objective of NEET is to have a common entrance-cum-eligibility test for admission to undergraduate medical education in all medical institutions across the country. There is a huge involvement of money in medical education, because there are private medical colleges in deemed universities. The NTA, which conducts the exams, should not make any proposal to cancel the NEET-UG and NEET-PG exams. After its establishment in the year 2018, NTA has served 5.5 crore students through more than 240 different exams. When the paper leak was noticed, the investigation on it was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Government assured to take full cognizance of it within two months. The most important thing is that when scattered leaks happen at different places, should the entire exam be cancelled? The Supreme Court judges have also said that the Government should take certain steps for whatever possibilities it sees to improve it. Education is in the concurrent list. It has not been included in the concurrent list now, rather it was included in this list when the Congress government was in power. In global impact, the entire education should be the same in all states. Arrangements should be made to give that education or qualifying exam in other languages as well. Provision was also made to give this exam in 13 languages through NEET. Today, through this exam, a boy from Tamil Nadu is coming to Maharashtra to study, a boy from Maharashtra is coming to Karnataka to study, that is, the whole of India is becoming one. Whether it is an IIT exam or an AIEEE exam, because of it, exchange of the youth, exchange of the student, this is also happening very well. After giving this exam to the state, after giving its responsibility, can anyone guarantee that the papers will not be leaked? This proposal is against the federal state, it is against the Supreme Court, it is against the sentiments of the people of India, it is against the opportunity that poor students are getting to sit in an exam. This is for the benefit of a handful of capitalists who are running medical colleges. Therefore, it is very important to withdraw this Resolution. In the last 5 years, so many cases of paper leak have come to light in Rajasthan that Rajasthan has become a model for paper leak. In Maharashtra, it was like shops were set up. A market was set up where people pay so much money and pass the exam. The examination can be conducted on computer only. Multiple choice questions may be asked in the examination and question bank of such questions can be made wider.

**SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL:** This is the matter of the youth of the country, and this should be talked about rising above party politics. The rigging in NEET is not like a common paper leak. The rigging of NEET happened as part of a well-planned conspiracy. It is not a good thing to re-examine so many people. Regarding the NEET exam centre, boys from other states were told to give option for the two centres in Godhra. They opted for the two centres in Godhra by giving a blank cheque and Rs 7 lakh in cash. In NEET exam, there is an OMR sheet and in that you have to tick the answers in black colour. That sheet is scanned by the computer and marks are obtained. If the son of a rich person gets admission in NEET by paying lacs of rupees, then the child of that poor person will not get admission. I am concerned for him.

**SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR:** I support this Resolution because of my sincere belief in the federal system of the Government. This over-centralization that is being undertaken on a daily basis on every subject is anti-federal. It is a CBSE-oriented examination that favours CBSC candidates. The experience with NTA has proved to be bad. Let us take cognizance of the experience and try to come across a better system. This quick computer marking system does not test the knowledge of a student. It does not test the aptitude of a student. I do it in

my state also because it is convenient. It is time for us to hark back to knowledge through small questions in narrative form and take away this computer-ticking multiple-choice system which is the breeding room of corruption. This NTA system has given way to a lot of coaching centres. There is lack of accountability. Then corruption is there. The numbers given in NEET are sold and you get a seat elsewhere against that. You are going in for over-centralisation because you are fighting an elite that was brought up in English. We must all learn three languages to survive in India. We swear by a three-language formula, but actually practice only one language. That is the sum and substance of our obsession with NTA, NEET and 'One nation, one examination'.

**SHRI N. R. ELANGO:** I request this august House to approach this issue beyond politics with a complete apolitical approach. The Government is defending NEET on three grounds. It is because of the judgements of the Supreme Court. It is to standardize medical education. It was brought by the earlier regime. One important observation in the review order of the Supreme Court is that the field of higher education being one such field which directly affects the growth and development of the State. It becomes prerogative of the State to take such steps which further the welfare of the people and in particular, pursuing higher education. The State Government should be the sole entity to lay down the procedure for admission, fees, etc., governing the institution running in that particular State except the centrally-funded institutions. The persons passing through NEET exam never ever go to rural areas to serve the rural population. The ground reality is that to clear the NEET examination, one has to go and join a coaching centre, which charges lakh of rupees. The rural people are not able to afford such kind of fee. 10+2 examination conducted by the State Governments should be used for deciding the merits of the students, and that should alone be the criteria. We do not have doctors who can serve in the rural areas. People belonging to the lower strata of society, who have secured good marks in the 12th examination, should be given a chance to study medicine rather than through the NEET examination. NEET is against the students' interest, states' interest and against the federalism of this country. So, I would request this august House to consider this and abolish NEET.

**SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:** I rise to speak about our deteriorating education system. From a very young age, our students are thrust into a relentless never-ending race. The joy of learning is overshadowed by the pressure to outperform our peers. This fierce competition is not just robbing our children of their childhood but is also driving them into despair and hopelessness. We must understand the flaws in our education system and the fact that they need urgent rectification. Not just this, we must also acknowledge that there is a huge gap between education and employment. As a result, we are pushing our students, the future of this country, into a trap of joblessness. This will remain until we address this gulf of difference between what the market demands and what our education system imparts. We are killing the talent of this country. In their quest for a better future, many of our brightest minds are forced to leave the country. Our education system does not align with the needs of the modern world. While we produce millions of graduates every year, the job market remains stagnant, unable to absorb this vast talent pool. As a result, our youth burdened with degrees and diplomas wander aimlessly in search of employment, often settling for jobs far below their qualification and aspirations. It is a great irony that our children who dream of serving the country are falling victim to the flaws and corruption within the education system. The very system that was designed to encourage and shape their future is now shattering their hope. The irregularities in the NEET examination paper are not only a failure of our education system but also a blow to the dreams of those who prepared day and night for the exam. In conclusion, I would urge the Government to conduct a thorough investigation into this paper leak and other irregularities and punish those who are responsible.

**SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA:** Earlier, education used to be in the State List, but the 42nd Constitutional Amendment led to its inclusion in the Concurrent List. There is unity in diversity in our country. There is diversity of food, diversity of clothing, diversity of regions, diversity of religion and diversity of language. Amidst all these diversities, there should have been respect for diversity in our approach, but I think that a concept like NEET and an institution like NTA does not do justice to that concept. Earlier admission was done in Delhi University on the basis of marks obtained in CBSE and different boards, but the introduction of CUET caused the mushrooming of coaching industry. Recently, this House has discussed coaching institutes in detail. As for the fee structure NEET, it is extremely high and entirely unaffordable for persons who have modest income. Secondly, this entire examination system is tilted towards CBSE and does not respect the priorities of the state boards. I will say in the end that we all have to seriously deliberate on this issue.

**DR. JOHN BRITTAS:** In every mature democracy, there is something called parliamentary outreach. The Parliament has to debate, analyze and understand where the things have gone wrong. I won't fault the intent of the NEET. But its process has a lot of flaws. I would urge the Treasury Bench to restore the subject of education into State List by bringing a resolution. The Founding Fathers were resolute to keep that education to the domain of States, considering the rich diversity of this nation. NTA has only 25 permanent employees to conduct 25 very important exams which affects the future of millions of students. It should make us as Parliamentarians analyze and understand where we have gone wrong. That is why I support the resolution of Mr. Abdulla. What are the key issues with regard to the NEET? It obliterates the rights of the States to regulate medical education. The second point is that it disproportionately favours CBSE students and causes disadvantages to those who are from the State Boards and economically weaker sections. And, most importantly, the transparency and security of the Centralized examination process needs to be ensured. I feel this is the right time for us to contemplate in a bipartisan manner on this issue as it concerns the future of millions of students and crores of people. I would earnestly support the Resolution moved by Mr. Abdulla.

**SHRI AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE:** I am speaking against the proposal put forward by Hon'ble Shri M. Mohammad Abdullah. Being a doctor myself, I have felt that this government's regime of the last ten years has ensured fairness, equal opportunity and quality. Before 2014, there was no uniformity in the syllabus or pattern and students had to prepare for their respective examinations separately. This increased financial stress as they had to go to different places to take the examination. NEET is successful in bringing together all the states of the country and it selects the best of talent who later excel as great doctors and specialists. We have seen this competence during Corona. There is transparency in it and everyone is equal in it, be it rich or poor. I also want to tell the House that in the last 5 years, there has been an increase of 71 percent in the number of women candidates and an increase of 72 percent in the number of women passing this NEET exam and a considerable increase in the number of candidates from the socially weaker section. Against this background, I believe NEET should stay as it creates a level-playing field and is in the interest of the students.

**THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE; MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS; AND THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA), intervening in the discussion, said:** I want to add some pertinent points for the knowledge of this House and people at large with regard to this ongoing debate. Initiative to introduce NEET was taken in 2018-19 under the leadership of the hon'ble Prime Minister. I was the Health Minister then. Listening to this debate on the Private Member's Resolution, I am getting a feeling that an attempt is being made to create a

perception that we are trying to usurp the rights of the states and that a situation has arisen in which only students from well-off family can enter medical education. I want to set the records straight here as what used to happen in the past. You will be surprised that a post graduate seat was sold for 8 crores. I am not saying this without reason. I am speaking on some facts. It had become an open business. Children had to go to Bhubaneswar for one exam; for the second, they had to go to Chennai, for the third, to Thiruvananthapuram, for the fourth, to Mumbai. They had to go to so many places. If you are sent to a state where you do not know even the roads, how would the child know what is going on in the medical education, when would he go and see the list? This was the condition of the medical education. Admission lists were displayed for half an hour or 45 minutes and then were removed. Later, they used to say that since the students did not come, we are using our discretion for these seats. This was pending in the Supreme Court for a long time. I am happy to state today that the NEET exam, which was earlier conducted in 154 cities, is now being conducted in 571 cities. If we see with regard to the social categories, then from 2019 to 2024, there is 65 percent increase in the children qualifying in the social categories. There is an increase of 102 percent in economically weaker section category. There is an increase of 93.05 in the ST category and 78.08 percent in the SC category. The representation of the OBCs has increased by 65 percent. For the first time, we started the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test in Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. There started the competition, and demand came from all the states, we did not refuse anyone, and we said that if anyone else wanted to do that, they could also do that. Today this exam is conducted in 13 languages. The advantage of this is that children educated in government schools are getting into medical education today. This has made a difference. This exam has tried to fulfill regional aspirations. All the systems that exist in India are very robust systems. Managing a population of 140 crores systematically is not an easy task. NEET is a very robust system, a very good system, a great medium to bring people from villages into medical education.

**DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN:** Karnataka is one of the first few States which allowed technical and professional colleges to mushroom. There were so many engineering and medical colleges there that with the support of the Government, more and more children started studying in engineering and medical colleges. Today, the country is aware of what is happening to the crores of children who want to appear in the entrance examination and the parents who want to make their children doctors and engineers by saving their entire life's savings. There has been talk of corruption. The officers of Economics Offence Wing investigated and informed that Rs. 30 lakh was being paid to get question paper. It is very clear that there is corruption in entire NEET system. NEET exam is being used to facilitate children associated with certain ideologies. The agency which transports question paper from one city to another is also a private agency. The business of coaching centers has got a boost in due to NEET. Only those who can go there and take coaching by paying lakhs of rupees, pass it. There should be equality in any entrance examination and in any education system. We are saying that the NEET exam must have been designed with good intentions, but loopholes were observed in it and this Government failed to conduct this exam. Therefore, I suggest that a committee of both the Houses should be formed and there should be a detailed discussion on this. We should think about how to conduct this exam in a new way and how to design the examination system so that more and more students from underprivileged classes and rural areas can participate and get seats. The Leader of the House was saying that so many big doctors have been produced, so many people have got facilities. But one thing is also that 5.8 million cases of malpractice by doctors have come to light. These are the same doctors who have become doctors fraudulently through NEET exam.

*Discussion remained inconclusive.*

## **OBSERVATIONS BY THE CHAIR**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** (i) Hon'ble Members, many Members write communications to me and before even the communication reaches me, they tweet about it. I privately call a Member. Please, don't do it because if you want to get traction in public domain and write it to the Chairman, give Chairman some time. I am available here as much time as I can make available. So, I will not appreciate and the House will approve it, that we must not engage into a situation where you write something to the Chairman, go public with it.

(ii) The House has to show objectivity. Therefore, this is not an occasion to take political mileage. On our education system, our competitive examination system, we had the occasion the Education Minister saying in the House the matter having been fully examined by the Supreme Court. Therefore, let all of us in the House and outside promote a mechanism so that talent does not get backseat. We must stand for meritocracy and not patronage.

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

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