

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, August 05, 2024/ Sravana 14, 1946 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I am pleased to extend birthday greetings to hon'ble Members of Parliament, **Shri Manoj Kumar Jha** and **Shri Venkataramana Rao Mopidevi**. Their birthdays are today.

Shri Manoj Kumar Jha, serving his second term in Rajya Sabha since April this year, is a well-known name, both in academics as well as in public life. He headed the Department of Social Work in Delhi University and continues to be active in guiding research scholars in social work. He serves as a national spokesperson of Rastriya Janata Dal. Shri Jha's oratory skills and poetic prowess are nothing short of extraordinary. We all are frequent witness to his wit and wisdom, humour, and sarcasm in this Chamber. His bipartisan stance on critical issues of national interest is greatly appreciated as well as his well-researched contributions inside the House. He is married to Shrimati Namrata Jha, and the couple is blessed with daughters, Moulishree and Maitreyi. Hon'ble Members, on behalf of this house and my own, we wish him a long, healthy and happy life, and extend greetings to his family members.

Shri Venkataramana Rao Mopidevi is a distinguished Member of Parliament who has been serving in this august House since June 2020. As a four-term Member in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and as a Minister in the State Cabinet, Shri Mopidevi is known for his significant contributions in socio-political landscape of Andhra Pradesh. Shri Mopidevi has the honour of being the first politician from the fishermen community in Andhra Pradesh to be elected in the Rajya Sabha. He is married to Shrimati Aruna Mopidevi, and they are blessed with a son, Rajiv, and a daughter, Dr. Sai Jasmeetha. Hon'ble Members, on behalf of this House, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life, and extend greetings to family members.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Demand to Bring Down Airfare from Gulf Countries

SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM: I would like to bring on record the organized loot by airlines, specifically to the Gulf countries. The rate has been increased by more than five times. If a poor labourer wants to travel from a Gulf country to India, ordinarily he has to pay Rs. 8,000, and 'to and fro' it would be Rs. 16,000. But now the present average rate from a Gulf country to Kerala or India is Rs. 46,000. If a middle class family of four wants to travel, ordinarily they have to pay around Rs.36,000. Now it would

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come up to Rs.3,64,000. This is the rate and how a hole is being burnt in the pockets of poor labourers and middle class in the Gulf, who are toiling hard to bring in remittances into our country. We call it organized loot because airlines are very much invariably together coordinating high fares, and they play a role to stand united in this aspect. India has received USD 120 billion in the last year, 2023, and Kerala accounts for 19 per cent of it. So, request the Central Government to intervene and stop this organized loot.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

2. Concern over Death of Children due to fall in Open Borewell

SHRIMATI DARSHANA SINGH: The daily incidents due to open borewells across the country are quite worrying. It has often been seen that people uproot the defunct tubewells and shift them to other places and after shifting the tubewell, the borewell is left open and is not leveled by filling it with soil. Due to this negligence, incidents of children falling into borewells occur frequently across the country, which causes loss of life and property as well as many other difficulties. In 2009, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance and issued guidelines on deaths due to falling into borewells. But even after a gap of a decade, the state governments did not follow the guidelines of the Supreme Court, due to which children continued to die by falling into borewells. I would like to request that there is an urgent need to take appropriate steps to close the defunct and open borewells across the country, so that incidents of children falling into borewells due to negligence can be stopped.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

3. Concern over Costly Treatment of Cancer in the Country

SHRI SANJAY SINGH: Cancer is a very big and serious disease. It breaks a person in two ways. The person who has cancer breaks down physically and his family breaks down financially. According to the WHO report, 22 lakh people have died of cancer in the last three years. In 2022 alone, 9 lakh people have died of cancer. Regarding this, it has been recommended in the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee that the government should make a law that 25 percent of the people should get free treatment in private hospitals. The second thing is that families are distressed when they see small children suffering from cancer. They sell their house and land to get them treated. Therefore, a recommendation has also been made regarding free treatment of children suffering from cancer. Diseases like cholera, malaria and meningitis have been notified by the government, but a serious disease like cancer has not been notified. I request that the disease of cancer be notified.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Demand to Declare the Ema Keithel (Women Market) of Manipur as a Living Cultural Heritage Site

SHRI MAHARAJA SANAJAOBA LEISHEMBA: In Manipuri, 'Ema' means Mother and 'Keithel' means Market, that is, 'Mother's Market'. It is also popularly known as Khwairamband Ema Keithel. Situated at the heart of Imphal city of Manipur, it is one of the oldest women markets in Asia, run only by women folk. The two women uprisings of Manipur, known as the Nupi Lan of 1904 and 1939, against the British colonial rule, were initiated and organized by the women leaders of this market. Because of its unique nature, its historical significance and its value of women's empowerment, I urge upon the Union Government to declare the Ema Keithel or Khwairamband Ema Keithel as a Living

Cultural Heritage Site under Article 51A and to preserve it as a place of historic interest and national importance under Article 49 of Indian Constitution.

(Shri Manoj Kumar Jha, Shrimati Mahua Maji, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik associated.)

5. Need for Addressing the Issues Faced by Journalists and Media Professionals

DR. V. SIVADASAN: The history of our world teaches us that journalism is the integral part of the liberation movement. Many of freedom fighters were active in journalism. The journalists are facing police cases including UAPA, arrest and imprisonment. In India, in the last 10 years, more than 100 journalists were killed in different places. The communal fanatics target the journalists, who are standing with people. Thousands of brilliant youngsters are working in media but the Government is not ready to protect them and the Government is not taking initiative to ensure proper wages to the journalists. The journalists have no social security. There are no proper welfare and pension schemes. The journalists are working in most in-human conditions. Human rights are violated in their work places. They are working for 14 to 17 hours. At present, Some of the media have given more importance to the advertisement than the news.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

6. Concern over Delays in Completion of National Highway Projects in Odisha

SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN: I would like to tell you about the condition of Odisha's national highways. Duburi-Chandikhole National Highway 53 is to be four-lane but it has not been completed. Rajamunda to Barkote National Highway 23 is also not complete. Bargarh to Barpali and Barpali to Balangir National Highway 26 is to be four-lane but it has also not been completed. National Highways 55 and 16 are also not complete and the work of widening National Highway 49 is also not complete. The work is also not of good quality because when the work is completed on one side, the road on the other side gets damaged. I request that the National Highways of Odisha should be repaired and completed as soon as possible and the lives and property of the people should be protected.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

7. Demand for a New Tourist Circuit to Promote Tourism in Udaipur, Mewar and Surrounding Tribal Areas

SHRI CHUNNILAL GARASIYA: I am demanding a survey for inclusion of new places in the tourism circuits of Rajasthan. At present, there are four tourism divisions in Rajasthan - Jodhpur, Jaipur, Ajmer and Kota. Similarly, there are about 10 tourism circuits in Rajasthan. The major ones among these are - Maru Circuit, Shekhawati Circuit, Dhundhar Circuit, Braj Mewar Circuit, Hadauti Circuit, Mewar Circuit, Merwar Circuit and Gaudwar Circuit. In the present perspective, there are many tourist places which have not been included in these tourism circuits yet. Hence, I demand from the government to get the survey of new tourist places done in Banswara, Dungarpur, Rajsamand, Chittorgarh, Bhilwara, Udaipur along with all these tourism circuits in Rajasthan and include these places in the tourism circuits.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Niranjana Bishi, Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik and Shri Devendra Pratap Singh associated.)

8. Demand to Check and Curb the Menace of Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) in the State of West Bengal

SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA: In the last two decades, whenever fake currency is caught anywhere in India, and any person is arrested, then it is directly linked to Kaliachak, Malda. The Reserve Bank reports that 20 percent of the fake currency in the whole of India is coming from West Bengal. We have an international border of 2200 km with Bangladesh. We are facing a silent demographic invasion. Fake currency is not only a disease of West Bengal, but it is being used in many places in India. Due to this, the migrant labour of West Bengal is also in danger today. Our democracy, our economy, our integrity, our internal security is in danger. This issue needs serious consideration. Not only counterfeit currency, but fake Aadhar cards and PAN cards are also made. This counterfeit currency is coming from Bangladesh. If NIA, Border Security Force and West Bengal Police work together and all political parties are also on the same page and people are made aware about the issue, then only this can be stopped.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Demand for the Bharat Ratna Award to Noted Litterateur Late Annabhau Sathe

***SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK:** Sahitya Ratna, Maharashtra Bhushan and folk singer Annabhau Sathe is known as the founder of Dalit literature. His literature gave voice to the exploited and deprived sections of society, and strengthened the movement for social justice. He wrote literature on topics such as child marriage, ban on dowry system, eradication of superstition, opposition to injustice in society and caste discrimination and the struggle of workers. His literature has inspired many thinkers and writers. His works received many awards and were translated into many languages. He worked tirelessly for the upliftment of the Dalit and deprived society. I request the Union Government to honour Annabhau Sathe ji with India's highest civilian award "Bharat Ratna".

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

10. Demand to name a road in Delhi After Lakhi Shah Banjara

SHRI BRIJ LAL: The Government is requested to name a road in Delhi after the famous 17th century trader and transporter Lakkhi Shah Banjara. Lakkhi Shah Banjara was the person who, with his caravan of thousands of oxen, took the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji out of the siege of Mughal soldiers and brought it to his house in the jungle of Raisina and then cremated him by setting his house on fire so that no disrespect could be done to the body of Guru Ji. The place where the cremation took place is today Gurudwara Rakabganj.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

11. Demand to Address Huge Pendency of Cases before Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals)

SHRI SANJEEV ARORA: I would like to express my deep concern regarding the significant backlog of appeals, a staggering number of five lakh, pending before Commissioner of Income Tax Appeals in India. Majority of these were lodged within the recent implemented faceless appellate system. This immense backlog not only contradicts the commitment to timely decisions outlined in the Taxpayers Charter, but, also raises serious questions about equity and fairness within the tax system. In last year, only around 10 per cent cases were resolved. To resolve this situation, enactment of appropriate legislations to

* Spoke in Marathi.

enforce stricter time limits on CIT appeals for appeal disposal is necessary. The Government should introduce measures to provide relief to taxpayers, waiving the requirement of 20 per cent pre-payment before filing appeal, refunding excess tax collected-recovered during prolonged delays, granting automatic stay on penalties and prosecution for appeals exceeding the specific timeframe, accountability for delays, establishing a system of accountability to address the root causes of delays within the system. The current pendency crisis discourages taxpayer compliance and undermines the integrity of the tax system.

12. Demand to Reduce the rate of GST on Health and Insurance Policies

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: I strongly urge the government to reduce the GST rate on medical and health insurance. Today the GST rate on these policies is 18 percent. This puts a huge burden on the middle class. Very few people in India take insurance and there is imbalance in that too. Life insurance is taken more and medical insurance less. The government's argument that only the GST Council can change the GST rates in its meeting is not correct. The Supreme Court has said that the GST Council is only an advisory body. The Government should take immediate action in this regard.

(Shri Sandosh Kumar P, Shri Imran Pratapgarhi, Shri Ramji and Shrimati Mahua Maji associated)

13. Demand to Restart the Sugar Mills at Nandganj in Ghazipur District of Uttar Pradesh

DR. SANGEETA BALWANT: I want to draw the attention of the Government towards the closed sugar mill in Nandganj, Sirohi, Ghazipur. This sugar mill is closed since 1997. It employed thousands of people not only from Ghazipur district but also from other districts and the farmers were also happy as their sugarcane was purchased. I request the Government to restart it or set up such an industry which helps in the development of the district and provides employment to the people.

(Shri Niranjan Bishi and Shri Dr.Sasmit Patra associated.)

14. Demand to Facilitate Issuance of Credit Card to Senior Citizens of the Country

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: The RBI has given guidelines to our banks saying that above sixty years of age is not credit-worthy. So, national and international banks open savings accounts of common citizens of 60 years or more and thus use their savings, but despite having large savings amount in their name, do not provide them credit cards. This is very regrettable. Today, credit card has become necessary not only for loan facility but also for many other facilities like online shopping, booking of railway and air tickets, hotel booking etc. Also, life expectancy in the country has increased. The Government is requested to pay attention to this problem and issue necessary guidelines to the banks.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

15. Demand to Build Elevated Road in the Section of Desuri Naal Connecting Pali, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur Areas

SHRI NEERAJ DANGI: The approximately 8 km stretch between Gadhbora and Desuri in Rajsamand district on the main highway SH 16 connecting Udaipur to Pali, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur region is known as Desuri Ki Naal and connects major cities related to Rajasthan's important business of marble and granite. Indian Army vehicles also use this route to travel between Udaipur and Jaisalmer. This area has many historical temples and forts and the famous Haldighati. But due to the poor condition of this route, on an average more than 100 people lose their lives in accidents every year and traders suffer losses worth

crores of rupees due to damage to marble and other goods. There are 12 dangerous turns in the route and dangerous slopes on 5 narrow culverts. Hence, the Government is requested to construct an elevated road on the of Desuri ki Naal road, so that this loss of life and property can be avoided.

(Shrimati Phulo Devi Netam, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Dr. John Brittas and Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham associated.)

16. Demand for Occupational Safety Measures and Facility of Insurance for Stunt Artists of Indian Film Industry

SHRI TIRUCHI SHIVA: The stunt artists of film industry display indispensable efficiency and talents to bring thrilling action sequences on the screen, but they are totally neglected. They often work without the safety nets. The absence of stringent safety standards on cinema-sets leads to preventable accidents, leaving artists vulnerable to life-altering injuries. This jeopardizes their physical well-being and imposes a heavy financial burden on them and their families. It is imperative to implement comprehensive safety protocols on film sets such as regular inspections, mandatory high-quality safety gear and rigorous training for both, artists and crew members. The Government must collaborate with industry stakeholders to incentivize compliance and nudge them towards implementing and enforcing these standards effectively. Internationally, film industries have detailed safety guidelines and dedicated union for stunt performers, India should adopt similar measures including the establishment of a stunt artists' safety board to oversee compliance with safety regulations and advocate for artists' rights. Most of the stunt Artists lack access to basic insurance coverage as private sector insurance companies often deem their work too unsafe to accommodate. The Government should come forward for their security under public sector insurance schemes.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

17. Need for Conducting Archaeological Exploration Located in State of Jharkhand

SHRIMATI MAHUA MAJI: There are many amazing things of geological and archaeological importance scattered in Singhbhum and Hazaribagh region of Jharkhand, which need extensive excavation and exploration. Various foreign journals and studies have pointed towards this. Remains of pre-dinosaur era and ice age have been found here. The central Government should conduct geological and archaeological surveys in the area, this will also promote geological tourism and researchers from all over the world will come here.

(Dr. John Brittas, Shri Niranjan Bishi, Shri Samik Bhattacharya, Shri Sanjay Yadav and Shri Manoj Kumar Jha associated)

18. Demand to abolish the Practice of using Colonial Era Titles in the working of Judiciary

DR. SIKANDER KUMAR: When young persons are inducted into a legal profession, they are taught to address the hon. Judges of the Courts of India, especially, the Judges of the hon. High Courts and hon. Supreme Court as 'Your Lordship', 'Your Ladyship', or 'My Lords'. This colonial era practice is not proposed or mandated by law, but due to its customary nature, it is still followed till date and has done more harm than good to the esteem and identity of young practitioner of law, because in its use, it proposes a separation of the ruled and ruler, and, at the outset, proposes or indicates no sense of justice. So, there is a need to do away with this colonial era practice.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024 was introduced.

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

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS; AND MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHAUHAN), continuing his unfinished reply dated 02.08.2024, said: The Congress did talk about direct assistance to farmers, but it never formulated a scheme like the Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi. It was formulated by our Prime Minister Narendra Modiji. The amount under the Kisan Samman Nidhi may be Rs 6,000, but this amount of Rs. 6,000 is important for small and marginal farmers. Many times, farmers needed a small amount to fulfill small needs. When they did not have money, they had to take loans at high interest rates. Kisan Samman Nidhi has made farmers self-reliant and empowered and their respect has also increased. They cannot see the respect of farmers! According to a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute, the amount distributed under the PM Kisan Yojana has acted as a catalyst in rural economic development. It has freed farmers from loan-related constraints and increased investment in the agricultural sector. It has also increased the risk-taking capacity of farmers, which has enabled them to make potentially more productive investments in the agricultural sector. They are talking about farmers and bullets! 24 farmers were killed during the Congress Governments in different States. In 1986, 23 farmers were killed in firing during the Congress Government in Bihar. In 1988, bullets were fired on farmers in Delhi on the death anniversary of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in which 2 farmers were killed. Similarly, in other States too, bullets were opened on farmers during the Congress Governments, in which many farmers lost their lives.

When I became the Agriculture Minister, I felt that I should go through the speeches of all the Prime Ministers of India till date and the most important speech is the speech delivered from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Independence Day on 15 August. Today I am revealing this fact with sadness that late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji mentioned the word 'farmer' only once in his 1948 speech. Apart from this, this word was not mentioned in any of his speeches delivered on the occasions of Independence Day. Late Indira Gandhi ji also accidentally mentioned the word 'farmer' once or twice in her speeches made on the occasions of Independence Day but she did not talk about any policy. Farmers were never the priority of late Rajiv ji too. But since our leader Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India, he talked about the farmers a number of times in his speeches and gave priority to farming. I don't like to abuse anyone, I never believe in criticism, but drama will not change the life of farmers. A leader who took out big yatras. During that yatra, he made a reel to show the real. He suddenly reaches a farm in Sonipat, Haryana, there were more cameramen than farmers. Two persons are holding him and taking him to the farm, he is asking the cameraman how to stand, what to do. They do drama in the name of farmers.

They will talk about farming, they will talk about farmers! BJP and our Prime Minister Narendra Modi thought about farmers. Since the time of Todarmal ji, all the records of farmers were maintained by the Revenue Department's Patwari. This practice continued even during the rule of Congress. All the patwaris are not bad, but if someone thinks of tampering with the records, then many times we have seen that the land in Dhanna's name went to Panna's name. There were many scams, cases remained pending in courts for the whole life. In the case of crop of a farmer getting damaged, the survey for the

relief amount was also conducted by the the Revenue Department employee and many times he turned dishonest. This system needed to be corrected. On behalf of the farmers of India, I would like to thank our visionary Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from the bottom of my heart that he resolved to start the "Digital Agriculture Mission". A Kisan ID is being created to give digital identity to the farmers like "Aadhar", which will be known as the identity of the farmer. This farmer ID will be linked with the State land records. Now if a farmer sows any crop, then there can be no manipulation in its record. After the crop grows, it will be videographed using mobile and saved, so that no one can make any mistake as to which crop has been sown. No person will assess the loss of the farmers, rather it will be done directly through remote sensing and eligible farmers will be given full relief. If the profit of farming is to be increased, then a holistic approach will have to be adopted. The Government is trying to make different departments plan together and move in one direction, so that the profit in farming can be increased further.

This Government will adopt an integrated approach. We are diversifying agriculture. The Government is planning as how to provide more benefits to small and marginal farmers by combining not only the farming of grains but also that of fruits, flowers, vegetables etc. as well as various types of work like animal husbandry, beekeeping etc. ICR has developed 74 integrated farming systems in different climatic zones based on different agro-climatic zones. In our country, the size of land holdings is quite small, so we are trying to find out how small farmers can earn profit. They should not only grow grains but also grow other crops, and also do associated work along with it.

The use of chemical fertilizers has proved to be a boon to fill our food reserves, but today chemical fertilizers are being used indiscriminately, due to which it is having an adverse effect on crops. I want to say one thing with pain that chemical fertilizers are necessary, but their use beyond a limit spoils our crops. The fertility of the land is decreasing and friendly insects are being killed due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers. Now the time has come that we will have to think about natural farming while increasing production. The Government has launched a mission on natural farming. Farmers are doing natural farming in many States. We will gradually awaken one crore farmers that to maintain the health of soil, it is not necessary to do natural farming in the entire land, rather if you have 5 acres of land, then do it in one acre, try it in half an acre. The products produced by natural farming are very nutritious and also improve the health of the soil and production also does not decrease.

We have to increase exports in agriculture. Presently India's exports are about 2 percent. This Government will tap the immense export potential and will leave no stone unturned to ensure that our farmers get maximum benefits. I would like to request all the hon'ble members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to visit Krishi Vigyan Kendra once. The research being done by the scientists in the laboratory there will have to be taken to the farmers in their own languages, therefore Krishi Vigyan Kendra is very important. We are going to develop 1,500 new climate-friendly varieties, so that agricultural production continues to increase despite the rising temperatures. If plants and animals are healthy, the humans will also be healthy. Our interests are interlinked. Therefore, to ensure goodwill among the living beings animals of India and welfare of the world, we are developing 15 advanced disease diagnostic kits. To improve the access of farmers to the market, 1,500 additional markets will also be integrated. I have called the agriculture ministers of different states and discussed the problems of agriculture there and tried to find solutions to them. Prime Minister, Modi ji's vision is that by 2047, India will not only produce nutritious, sufficient grains, fruits and vegetables for its people, but will also emerge as the food basket of the world. There are problems in agriculture, but there are solutions too. We will go and

talk to the farmers, we will also talk to the farmers' organizations, we will move towards solutions through dialogues and will move forward taking everyone along.

Discussion concluded.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: (i) I rule there is no right to reply under Rule 238 (ii). If a member feels aggrieved, he has to take recourse to the rule in a different format, I am putting it on record, not according to this.

(ii) Hon'ble Members, I have received another communication today in relation to the address being imparted by the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. This communication is, again, from Shri Digvijaya Singh, from Shri Sanjay Singh and from Shri Randeep Surjewala. Their assertion in this communication is that hon. Agriculture Minister has named the undersigned and cast aspersions indicating facts in the course of Discussion on the Department of Agriculture. So, three distinguished hon'ble Members, who are very senior Members of the House, want to invoke Rule 238 to seek an opportunity to reflect in the matter. Hon'ble Members, I have given my careful, thoughtful consideration. Hon'ble Members do have a right if another Member or a Minister casts aspersions or makes a statement that may not be factually correct in the assessment of the hon'ble Members. There is a mechanism and the hon'ble Members need to avail that mechanism. As and when the hon'ble Members will avail that mechanism, I will consider it and take all actions in accordance with law. I am extremely serious and conscious that any statement made in the House by a Minister or a Member has to be factually sanctified. And if anyone is aggrieved, please take recourse to rules. These two communications seek to avail Rule 238 for this purpose. I am afraid, they have invoked the wrong rule.

DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN, initiating the discussion, said: I have three specific points. The first one is to the Minister. I am suggesting a mantra for your Ministry. 'Think nationally, act locally.' Consult with four stakeholders. These are: Local governments, State Governments, communities and the private sector. Consult with them in the spirit of cooperation. Unfortunately, this spirit of consultation is antithetical to their thinking because they know everything about every subject. There are all big announcements. But zero action. 10,000 mw PM-KUSUM programme was announced in 2019 by this Ministry. The target they have achieved is below three per cent. Same is the problem with the Green Hydrogen Mission. Our suggestion to Government is to reduce dependency on China, Thailand and Vietnam. Discuss and come up with policy decisions.

DR. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE: At the inauguration of the first meeting of the International Solar Alliance in 2018, India emerged as a pioneer and at that time gave the slogan of - One World, One Sun and One Grid. We have increased 26 times in the field of solar energy. This Government has set a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2070. For this, an investment of Rs 8 lakh crore will also come and 6 lakh people will also get employment. The Government wants to achieve zero carbon emissions through hydrogen, solar energy and coastal wind energy. The Government wants to reduce the production of energy based on coal, oil and gas. This Government is working with the target of achieving

the capacity of 50 lakh tonnes of annual green hydrogen by 2030 and wants to generate 125 gigawatts of energy through hydrogen energy. Along with this, it wants to produce 60 to 100 gigawatts through electrolyser. In the field of renewable energy, India today is at par with Europe, America, Australia and Korea in the world. The government is working towards a target of achieving 5 MMT hydrogen capacity, producing 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually, by 2030. On 13 February 2024, the hon'ble Prime Minister had announced the 'Surya Ghar' Yojana. With this, every person will install a solar panel on his roof and will be able to provide electricity to the grid as well as to his home. Banks have also been made to provide loans free of collateral security at 7 percent interest for installing solar panels. With a view to freeing people from the hassles of the government system, the 'Jan Samarth' portal has been developed, where a person will register himself and will also search for a vendor on the same portal to install a solar panel at his place. The country is moving towards an installed capacity of 500 GW of electricity from non-fossil (renewable, green and nuclear) sources by 2030. By 2030, 50 percent of the energy requirement will be met by renewable energy. The target of creating 1 crore jobs in the renewable energy sector and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2070 is to be achieved. Along with this, tariffs are also going to be reduced. Along with solar energy, the achievements of offshore wind energy on the sea-coasts are also an important dimension in the field of renewable energy. India has a coastline of about 7,600 kilometers on land, which has been identified in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The Government will buy the electricity obtained from offshore wind energy at the rate of Rs. 4 per unit. There has been a 26 percent increase in the field of solar energy, and we want to increase it by 100 percent, while today India has also achieved double the capacity in the field of wind energy. Through this renewable energy, while we will complete our work of electricity, we will also work to protect humanity, we are also working to protect the environment.

SHRIMATI RANJEET RANJAN: Earlier, all renewable energy equipment such as biogas plants, solar energy-based equipment, solar lanterns, etc. were subjected to only 5% GST. The GST rate on renewable energy equipment has now been increased from the previous 5% to 12%. The Government is taxing those who dare to store and use the energy coming from the sun. You said that the target set is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2070, but the way the tax is increasing, we do not think you will be able to achieve this target. India may face power cuts in the evening by 2027 and while you have focused only on solar energy for increasing renewable energy, the budget for hydro and wind energy has also been reduced significantly in this budget. Under the 'PM Surya Free Electricity Home Scheme', there is a target to provide electricity to 10 million homes. You talk about rooftop solar energy, 'PM Surya Free Electricity Home Scheme', but the rooftop solar energy initiative fell 40 percent short of the 2022 target. PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme - It is costing you 50-60 thousand rupees for 1 kilowatt. You are giving subsidy of about 78,000 rupees on one and a half lakh rupees. You are charging 7 percent interest on about 72,000 to 73,000 rupees from the consumers, so first of all tell me whether this is a free scheme? Solar panels are expensive for a poor man. Suppose, even then if he gets a panel worth one and a half lakhs installed, will the Government provide insurance for it in case of damage or theft on the roof, because right now the poor man has to bear this expense. Has the Government established any such government approved agency, OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer), which can assure free repair and maintenance to the poor and middle class at least for the first 4-5 years? My demand from the Government is that at least the 7 percent interest on market rate in the name of free should be made zero. For the basic solar modules and batteries of PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme, we are completely dependent on imports from China. To reach the target of 500 GW by 2030, you have to build 50 GW every year, but in reality, after adding solar, green, hydro and bio-gas, you are building only 15

GW. DISCOM is becoming the biggest problem for developers. It is very important for the Government, DISCOM, developers, consumers - that is, the poor, common man and middle class - to have coordination among themselves, which is not visible right now. We know the problem of DISCOM very well that its revenue comes more from coal, coal electricity is more expensive for it, so why will it go towards green energy and good energy and why will it pay more attention to its supply? If there is no coordination between the state government, DISCOM, developers and consumers, then we will not be able to achieve the target of 300 GW for 6 years by 2030 at all. There is a lot of potential for energy in Bihar and Chhattisgarh. Solar energy developers should be encouraged there too. The Government has done some work in Chhattisgarh but is not doing any work in Bihar. The target was 10 thousand megawatts by the year 2019, out of which only 2.56 was achieved, that is, less than 3 percent. You had to solarize 35 lakh agricultural pumps, but only 13,562 have been solarized so far and GST is being levied on these too. Will we achieve the target this way? The Government had said that 51,000 hectares of unused railway land, which is next to the railway track, has the potential to generate at least 10 GW of clean energy. Forget 10, has even 2 GW been built around the railway track? The Government has made wind energy disappear from this budget today. It is true that wind energy is costlier than solar energy, but only 2-3 players have monopoly in it. If you increase the competition among players, their monopoly will reduce, then naturally wind energy will also become cheaper. Data center is a very big emerging sector. Big companies of the world, Amazon, Microsoft, all are connected. They also want to be connected to grid energy, but this is not happening. In the year 2021-22, more than 16,01,155 metric tonnes of electronic waste has been generated in the country and the Government has failed to meet the e-waste management rules. I request the Government that good energy equipment should be exempted from the scope of GST, so that people are encouraged to go for solar energy. I hope the Government will solve the problems faced in the existing renewable energy. I request the Government to take appropriate steps to provide at least 33 per cent reservation to women in the Ministry and the undertakings working under it.

SHRI S. NIRANJAN REDDY: I commend the Government for increasing the allocation from Rs. 7, 623 crores of last year to Rs. 18,852 crores this year. This is a jump of 147.29 per cent. We have six years left and we need Rs. 30 lakh crores for achieving this nationally determined contribution of 2030 to which India has pledged. If India wants to stay on its target of achieving 'net zero' by 2070, Niti Aayog has stated that India would need an investment of ten trillion US Dollars. Almost ninety per cent of this, needs to come from private sector. They would need to come and invest in green energy sector. Government needs to play a facilitator. The modern data centres that support Artificial Intelligence need a lot of energy. There is a provision in the Energy Conservation Act that a particular percentage of power need to be procured from green energy sources. This will ensure that these data centres will start increasing the procurement of their power requirement from the green energy sources. The next issue is that of the Research and Development Budget. The allocation has increased almost 11.5 percent, but in actual terms, it is still less than .5 per cent of the Ministry's overall Budget. The Government have to look at bio-fuel and bio-gas for the purpose of increasing procurement from green energy sources. The advantage with the bio energy is that it can be localised, it can be smart and it can be done by involving the local bodies and the State Government. The task is too huge and it will need all stakeholders to come together. The Government could consider offering an incentivised Minimum Support Price in relation to anything that would contribute to bio-fuel. That might result in a larger harnessing of bio-fuel, which may be used for the benefit of the country. The Government needs to step up efforts for smart management. There is a Smart Grid Policy.

The country is also using AI solutions. I hope all of us work seriously because this is going to be a huge factor in terms of our energy requirement.

DR. KANIMOZHI NVN SOMU: The new and renewable energy is just not power generated from non-fossilized energy sources like the Sun or the wind or the biodegradable waste, but it is a life-saving mechanism that is indispensable to renew our Mother Earth. It is the only way to free our next generation from the clutches of the ill-effects of the greenhouse gases and depletion of the ozone in the atmosphere. The rising Sun is always indispensable for the development of our country. The primary objective for developing renewable energy in India is to advance economic development, improve energy security, improve access to energy and mitigate climate change. It is very important for our country to reduce the reliance on coal and oil in the coming years. Our country must have a rapid transition to renewable energy technologies to achieve sustainable growth and avoid catastrophic climate change. The Government has to develop and design more proactive policies, programmes and a liberal environment to attract foreign investments to upscale India in the renewable energy market at a rapid rate. One of the other advantages of renewable energy sector is that it is expected to create a large number of domestic jobs. Given the numerous potential of renewable energy in the country, coherent policy measures and an investor-friendly administration might prove to be the key factors of India to become a global leader. I would like to suggest a few pertinent points which I am sure will ensure the overall growth of renewable energy sector in India. The Government should fund generously. The Government should insist RBI and banks to designate Renewable Energy projects under "priority sector lending". The Government should collaborate with State Governments and private institutions to establish land banks with fully ready-made lands for establishing solar and wind power plants. They should also create a dedicated Green energy corridor grid connectivity. They should also have a multi-ministerial agreement to create a dedicated transport channel. The ambitious Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna aims at providing subsidised rooftop solar installations to one crore households. PM-KUSUM has been launched for setting up subsidized solar pumps and distributing solar power plants across the country. It is one of the biggest initiatives through which farmers would be benefited. The State Government subsidy is 30 per cent. The remaining 40 per cent has to be borne by the farmer. For the Government to call a scheme as free it needs to spend the whole amount. But asking the people to spend Rs. 2 lakh under these schemes and calling it free is totally unjustifiable.

SHRI SANDEEP KUMAR PATHAK: It is very sad to see India's solar mission, the overall renewable energy mission, and the implementation of the mission. Our country has immense potential in renewable energy which no other country has. Our country gets sunlight for 300 days. We can meet all our energy requirements only through solar energy. But the vision of our solar energy policy is not to create growth and jobs but to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Unless we are convinced that solar energy and renewable energy is the future of the country, the Government cannot do anything big. The Government has set a target of 500 GW by 2030, which means about 50 percent of our total energy requirement has to come from renewable energy. But given today's situation, achieving that target is a difficult task. Inconsistent policies discourage investors, developers and consumers. If the Government has to achieve its solar energy policy targets, it will need capital. The Government will need almost three times the capital it has available for the policy. Project delays in this country are the biggest challenge for the growth of any industry. If we talk about discoms, unless the Government strengthens the distribution channels, no matter how good the policy is, success will not be achieved. The Government will also have to focus on improving the technology in discoms, give them subsidies, incentives, pay their dues so that

they can invest that capital in improving the technology. Success will not be achieved unless there is a skilled workforce. Solar energy equipment will be installed but if there are no skilled workers to repair them, then no matter how much subsidy or incentive the Government gives, if the equipment breaks down, customers will again go back to normal energy. The Government is investing money in solar energy, wind energy, but unless the money is not invested in battery technology, no advancement is made in battery technology, the solar energy or renewable energy industry will not grow. The policy paralysis, policy delays and late entry, all these things put together, are making the task tough for the Government.

SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI: The Budget may still fall short in supporting the emerging renewable energy technology, such as tidal energy and wave energy, despite increased allocation. Lack of focus on local manufacturing of renewable energy equipments could hinder self-reliance and make India dependent on imports. Delays in project implementation and funds disbursement may continue affecting timely execution of renewable energy projects. The funds allocated for upgrading transmission and distribution infrastructure to handle the increased load from renewable energy sources are insufficient. Small scale and community based renewable energy projects may not receive adequate attention or funding limiting their potential impact. Land acquisition for large-scale renewable energy projects can cause significant delays and cost overruns. Integration of renewable energy into the national grid remains a technical and operational challenge, requiring more robust solutions for grid stability and management. While there are incentives for renewable energy projects, there is lack of robust monitoring and accountability mechanism to ensure that funds are used efficiently and projects are completed on time and within budget. Despite efforts, gaps remain in achieving comprehensive rural electrification and ensuring renewable energy supply in remote areas. Besides, these renewable energy projects may also cause displacement of communities and may have impact on local ecosystem. This needs to be addressed more comprehensively. "PM-Surya Ghar promises to provide 300 units of free electricity to the poor but it has still not been given to any poor person in Odisha, whether SC-ST, poor or backward.

SHRI A.D. SINGH: I want to bring it to the notice of the ruling dispensation regarding renewable energy that we do not have one Ministry to deal with the energy sector. Currently, separate Ministries are managing fossil fuels and renewable energy and there is lack of coordination. The Ministry of Coal might contradict renewable energy target set by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. There is lack of energy storage capacity which limits the ability to store excess renewable energy for later use, thereby hindering the effectiveness in meeting peak demand. There is no research and development in the renewable sector which is of great significance in the renewable energy sector with a view to reduce the cost of disposing waste generated by technology and recycling. India's dependence on imported green technology, particularly with China's dominance in solar panels, wind turbines and critical minerals creates vulnerability as about 70 per cent of India's solar power generation capacity is built on Chinese-made solar equipment. This reliance exposes India to potential supply chain disruptions and price hikes in geopolitical situations. In light of this, I want to emphasize that we should have a clear-cut policy regarding renewable energy and how to implement it to achieve the targets set by the Government in the next few years.

DR. V. SIVADASAN: In the context of the Wayanad tragedy, the discussion on renewable energy is very relevant. In the backdrop of climate change challenges, the world is bracing for a fast energy transition towards renewable energy sources. The Government has a historic role to play in this transition. The new and renewable energy is the source of energy of today and tomorrow. The conception of energy is one of the indicators of the Human

Development Index, but I am sorry to say that the Union Government is failing to deliver this historic responsibility in an effective, just and equitable manner. In India, per capita energy consumption is only 1,002 kilowatt per hour which is much less than per capita consumption of countries like America, France, China or Iceland. The world average per capita consumption is 3,200 kilowatt per hour. Even then, power cut and load shedding is happening in India. The Government has failed to achieve its own goals set for renewable energy. To cover up this colossal failure, the Government now projects a new target of 500 gigawatt. This failure is the result of crony capitalist policy pursued by this Government. The misguided orientation of the Government resulted in pushing away our public companies like NTPC, NHPC and THPC from the mainstream of renewable energy development. The promotion of renewable energy is possible only through the development of a proper power storage facility. The Government should provide proper money for the research and development activities in this field. At present, the generation of renewable energy is not viable for the downtrodden of the society. It is proved by the prices of solar panel and e-vehicles. I urge the Government to protect the interest of the downtrodden, and the Government should provide more financial allocation for the research and development sector of universities and institutions to promote new battery system and new storage facilities. Till now, the Government has not given proper attention to the research and development in solar and renewable energy sector.

DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI: Today, we are discussing a topic that is not just India's future, but the future of the world. The discussion that is taking place here in Parliament will not only benefit the 140 crore brothers and sisters of the country, but will also benefit eight billion people of the world. This step will bring revolutionary changes in the field of renewable energy. India will not only be self-reliant in this field, but will also be in a position to cooperate with the world. Renewable energy that depends on natural sources includes various types of solar energy, geothermal energy, wind energy, tidal energy, water energy and biomass and it can never end and is constantly renewed. Not only is it environment friendly, but it also has many economic benefits attached to it. Keeping in mind the responsibility for a clean earth, India has resolved that under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, by the year 2030, 40% of our electricity production capacity will be based on clean sources of energy. With the achievement of this ambitious target, India will join the ranks of the world's largest clean energy producers. Renewable energy will not only light up the homes of India, but our country will also light up the neighboring countries. To facilitate large-scale adoption of rooftop solar energy, the Union Cabinet has approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryaghar Free Electricity Scheme'. Through this scheme, families will be able to save on electricity bills as well as earn additional income by selling surplus electricity to DISCOMs. Employment will also be generated through establishment of renewable energy. Power sector data shows that during the last three years, the total capacity addition in the renewable energy sector has been significantly higher than that in the conventional sector. The share of solar and wind power in India's power capacity has increased unprecedentedly. Due to technology development, continuous policy support and a vibrant private sector, India has become a leading investment destination for global clean energy investors. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kusum Yojana, work is being done towards setting up Kusum solar plants for the farmers by giving them bank loans. I appreciate the important role of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy towards realizing this goal. Under the dynamic leadership of Shri Narendra Modi Ji, today we get power for our home and agricultural fields round the clock. There has been an unprecedented increase of 21 percent in production of energy through non-fossil sources. India is all set to be the global leader in the field of New and Renewable energy.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: The shortage of power in the country and Karnataka state has been a harsh reality. One of the former Chief Ministers of Karnataka himself had highlighted this problem in his book, entitled "*Karnataka in Darkness*". While being the Chief Minister, I provided adequate irrigation facilities to farmers, SC and ST people in Karnataka, free of cost. For this, I also coordinated with Government of Maharashtra and Bala Sahab Thakre to mitigate the farmers' woes. I have enough firsthand experience of this problem. However, we must also acknowledge the fact that after 2014 there has been a massive improvement in power generation. Most importantly, there has neither been scam nor any corruption, nor any allegations about power projects. For a huge population of 1.4 billion people, the sustainable development depends only on constant supply of green and clean energy, while fulfilling all international obligations. During recent past, the solar power generation has gone up substantially. It has increased about four times. However, more needs to be done to meet the ever growing demands. Presently, only 20 percent energy demand is met through new and renewable resources. As estimated, by 2030, we will have a share of 50 percent power generated through non- fossil sources. For this, we need higher allocation of funds. Also, the state wise disparity has to be addressed. At present, the new and renewable power generation capacity of Karnataka happens to be about 2.8 percent against the national average of 14 percent. Therefore, the full potential of the state needs to be harnessed. The barren land, instead of arable land, must be utilized for installation of power projects in the state. I urge the Government to intervene in the matter on priority basis.

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SPECIAL MENTIONS

1. Demand for Railway Over Bridge at Samsi Railway Crossing, Malda, West Bengal

SHRIMATI MAUSAM NOOR: There has been a long-standing demand of my previous parliamentary constituency and the region for a Railway overbridge at Samsi railway crossing, Malda, West Bengal,. This project was sanctioned in the 2012 Railway Budget. The Samsi is a significant business hub in Uttar Malda, connecting Malda North to Malda South and linking North Malda to Bihar, Siliguri, Kolkata and vast area of Bengal. Every day, thousands of people get stuck for hours at the Samsi railway crossing, causing significant stress and loss of time. I urge the Railway Department to fulfill the demands of the people of Malda Uttar at the earliest.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

2. Demand for Mental Health Helpline to Reduce Farmer Suicides

DR. BHAGWAT KARAD: The suicides by farmers in Marathwada region of Maharashtra has become a tragic and pressing issue. This region is plagued by drought, debt, and economic instability. In India, over 10 thousands farmers die by suicide each year. In the first half of 2023 alone, over 500 farmers in Marathwada took their own lives. The depression and financial despair is the primary reason for these suicides. In response to this crisis, the Government must take an immediate action and set up a special farmer helpline under the National Mental Health Mission for providing them psychological support and counseling.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

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

3. Demand for Restoration and Support for Khazan Land in Goa

SHRI SADANAND MHALU SHET TANAVADE: The Khazan Land System, an engineering marvel crafted by our ancestors, centuries ago. This land system is a perfect model of an ecosystem with an excellent blend of men, marine life, flora, fauna, land, agriculture, water bodies, migratory bird habitats, mangrove forests, and beautiful backwaters. However, these lands are now facing threats from extreme weather events driven by climate change. I urge the Government to provide the necessary assistance in terms of Special Grants, technical expertise and a robust policy framework to revitalize Khazan lands. Restoring Khazan lands will not only preserve our cultural heritage but also enhance environmental sustainability.

(Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla, Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu and Dr. Sasmit Patra associate.)

4. Demand for Giving Benefit to Villagers by Putting Closed and Abandoned Coal Mines to Use

SHRIMATI MAHUA MAJHI: There are many open cast mines in Jharkhand's Ramgarh, Kuju, Bhurkunda and other areas which are in an abandoned state after the mining process has stopped. Due to this, hundreds of acres of precious land of the Government is getting wasted. Here rainwater forms ponds. Due to the lack of information about their depth, villagers die by drowning. Coal dust pollutes the environment. Due to the use of this polluted water, trees, plants, animals, insects, fish etc. are also harmed and people fall ill. If the government wants, pure drinking water can be made available to the villagers by setting up a treatment plant there and this water can also be used for irrigation. From the point of view of security, these mines should be fenced and the damage to the environment from the dangerous coal dust particles should be prevented through tree plantation.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Request for Establishment of Aviation Varsity in Hyderabad

DR. K. LAXMAN: The Hyderabad is the sixth largest metropolitan in India. Apart from being known for its rich history, culture and fine arts, it is also known as the 'City of Pearls'. This city has several defence, educational, legal, agricultural, training, research and development institutes. It has 17 universities, and other world-class institutes like AIMS, IIT, etc. It is home to hundreds of multinational companies, including Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Infosys, Wipro, and so on. It is also emerging as a leading centre in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and tourism sectors. Moreover, it has a good weather round the year. It also has various Air Force Stations and airports. So, it would be in fitness of things to set up an Aviation University in Hyderabad.

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P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

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